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The Period Rooms at Ryerss Museum: A History and Photographic Analysis

Laura Keim Stutman
University of Pennsylvania

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**THE PERIOD ROOMS AT RYERSS MUSEUM:
A HISTORY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

Laura Keim Stutman

A THESIS

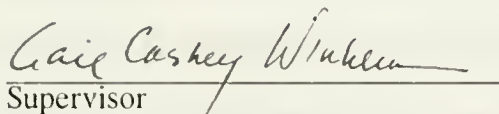
in

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

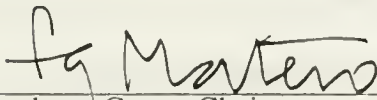
1999



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in the Ryerss Museum grew out of my on-site internship begun in the summer of 1996 and continued through the 1996-1997 academic year. I have enjoyed my time spent documenting the Ryerss family and the way they lived at Burholme, during which I sometimes felt as if it were my own house museum. My work has been sustained by the fun in uncovering the past, and the encouragement and interest offered by so many people. There are several individuals, in particular, whose contributions have helped to bring this project to fruition.

The classes taught by Gail Caskey Winkler and Roger W. Moss in the department of Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania who teach the History of American interiors and Historic Site Management and Interpretation, respectively, inspired me to pursue a topic related to both areas of inquiry. Gail Winkler, as my advisor, saw me through the extra two years required to finish this project, and Sandra Mackenzie Lloyd, my reader, helped to focus this paper and aided my realizing that photographs are historical objects in and of themselves, beyond their value as illustrations of the past. Hyman Myers and Frank Welsh were willing to discuss their professional involvement in the renovation, a project which had occurred twenty years earlier.

The choice of this particular topic was perhaps most inspired by Mary Lou Campbell, who has served the Ryerss Museum and Library for twenty-three years as a Librarian and Facilities Supervisor, and most recently as a part-time Museum staff member. Mary Lou's knowledge and experience were vital contributions to this thesis. Her love of the building and the family history inspired this project because Burholme, a stunning Italianate villa in the manner of Samuel Sloan, deserves to have its story revealed and told.

Finally I thank my husband, Steve Stutman, and my family for their love, encouragement and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	v
Introduction	1
Chapter I ‘Burholme’: The Robert Waln Ryerss Library and Museum	4
Chapter II History of the Ryerss Family and Burholme, Their Suburban Summer House	13
Chapter III The First Floor at Burholme, A c. 1900 View.....	29
Hall	38
Parlors	44
Front Parlor	45
Back Parlor	52
Mantelpieces	57
Conclusion	62
FIGURES	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	120
INDEX	125

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The front or south facade of Burholme	66
Figure 2	The third floor storage room	67
Figure 3	The first floor of the Ryerss Museum, 1910s	68
Figures 4-11	The hall	69-76
Figures 12-27	The parlor	77-92
Figures 28-36	The back parlor	93-101
Figures 37-42	The dining room	102-107
Figure 43	Burholme by Edmund Darch Lewis, 1875	108
Figure 44	Fire Insurance Plan of Burholme, 1872	109
Figure 45	Current Plan of Burholme	110
Figure 46	Joseph Waln Ryerss	111
Figure 47	Anne Waln Ryerss	112
Figure 48	Robert Waln Ryerss	113
Figure 49	Mary Reed Ryerss Bawn	114
Figure 50	Mary Ryerss in the second floor library	115
Figure 51	Phebe Lewis Waln	116
Figure 52	Robert Waln	117
Figure 53	Unknown man with a dog on the steps at Burholme ...	118
Figure 54	Old Grey, painted by Newbold Hough Trotter, 1873 ..	119

Introduction

I became acquainted with the Robert Waln Ryerss Museum in mid May, 1996, at the outset of my summer internship as the manager of the Museum. It was a dream come true, my own museum to research, contemplate and interpret. In reality, the daily sorting and reorganizing of the files, closets, and storage throughout the building were not so glamorous. However, this process allowed me to understand just which objects survived from the Ryersses' occupancy and to review the research that had been executed by volunteers and professionals in preparation for nomination of the house to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and the renovation and restoration begun in 1977.

Today, museum professionals recognize the importance of historic context to the understanding of artifacts. Chapter One outlines that context for Burholme the building. Chapter Two is the history of the individuals who owned and decorated the villa. Chapter Three closely examines c.1900 photographs of the hall, the parlor, the back parlor and the dining room. I chose to focus on these four spaces because they have been interpreted as quasi-period spaces since 1974 when the Friends of Burholme sought to return a sense of the house to the Museum. The analysis of the photographs further relates the finishes and furnishings of the four rooms to period household advice books, including those of Clarence Cook, Charles Locke Eastlake and Harriet Spofford. The study undertaken in this chapter indicates that the Ryersses and Mary Reed Ryerss Bawn chose to make individual statements in their home while simultaneously expressing themselves within the decorative vocabulary of their time.

Specific recommendations for an interpretive exhibit of the photographs are discussed in the Conclusion. These suggestions are necessarily compatible with several problems that plague the museum. The Museum spaces need to be available to the public more days per week, yet inadequate staffing raises the question of the security of the artifacts. Educational exhibits are needed to interpret the rooms, creating a self-guided tour that narrates the story and describes the objects while a volunteer acts as a security guard. The reality of the situation at Ryerss Museum is that adequate, on-site, permanent staff to run the Museum, a full-time director and a full-time curator at the bare minimum, is not in the immediate future.

In addition to the exhibit proposal, discussed in the Conclusion, the Museum needs to encourage tourism, making Ryerss a site that is well known not only to the local community but throughout the Delaware Valley region and ultimately beyond. The current visitorship of the site as a whole is relatively high, about 21,800 visitors per year, but many of these people are library patrons or participants at the annual Christmas Bazaar.¹ As is typical of most institutions like Ryerss Museum, the current situation is a paradox. Better interpretation is required to attract more visitors, and more visitors are needed to justify the expense of additional study and interpretive changes.

This thesis is neither an object study nor a historic house museum plan. Rather it unites the history of the family with that of the building and its furnishings. More research remains to be undertaken at Burholme, especially with

¹I view the Library as a unique asset to the Museum and as an important part of the tour, where visitors can closely study the photographs of the site and related literature. The library is gradually building a collection of local history, decorative arts and preservation related books so that Museum visitors can be encouraged to read some of the period literature and even check it out of the library if they live in the community. Because Burholme is a public park, a library and a museum, people have three reasons to visit the site.

regard to the Museum addition, the smaller objects housed within the addition, Mary Ryerss and her second husband, John Grant Bawn and their life, travels, and influence on the early Museum. This paper, however, focuses on the Ryerss family and the interiors as depicted in surviving photographs.

The next logical steps are to study the twentieth-century history of the institution in greater detail and to search for the descendents of Mary Ryerss Bawn's nieces and nephews to determine if additional Ryerss possessions or papers survive in private hands.² Hopefully this thesis will be the basis for future research and a useful tool that the Fairmount Park Commission and the Friends of Burholme can use to raise funds in order to better interpret the first floor spaces. A well-executed exhibit of the c.1900 photographs along with some of the objects in the images that survive in the collection, in the actual spaces depicted, has the potential to enhance visitors' understanding of and appreciation for the past, not a generic Victorian past, but the beliefs, values and ways of life of the Ryerss family, a far more engaging and real story.

²This could be accomplished efficiently by using the names in Mary Ryerss Bawn's will and using the genealogical records of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to find descendents.

Chapter I

‘Burholme’: The Robert Waln Ryerss Library and Museum

Burholme, the Italianate villa today known as the Robert Waln Ryerss Library and Museum, has undergone many changes, including additions, subtractions and substitutions to the fabric of the building, since the original structure of the house was erected in 1859 (figure 1).³ Unlike the majority of house museums open to visitors in America today, the Ryerss Museum is not strictly a historic house, interpreting American life in its particular time period and locale. Rather it is a house which was internally modified and adapted in the first decade of the twentieth century to become both a museum and a library, in accordance with Robert Waln Ryerss's (1831-1896) wishes. On June 25, 1895, five days after he married his longtime servant Mary Anne Reed⁴ (1848?-1916), Robert Ryerss wrote his will, which in part specifies that:

After the death of my wife I give devise and bequeath to the City of Philadelphia all that part of my Farm near Fox Chase with my Country seat called Burholme in the Thirty-fifth Ward to be used as a Public Park, the same to be called "Burholme Park.". . .The house to be fitted up as a Public Library and reading rooms in which are to be placed my books, and one or more rooms

³Burholme means "house in a wooded setting" according to past brochures about the house. However, I was unable to substantiate this claim by searching for "Burholme" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Nicholas Waln, who emigrated to America came from Burholme in Yorkshire, England.

⁴Mary Anne Reed had served the Ryerss family for approximately twenty-five years when Robert married her on June 20, 1895, in the library at Burholme. Mary was born January 20, 1848, according to a slip of paper in the "Family History" file at the Ryerss Museum. She probably immigrated to the United States about 1868. She was the daughter of Robert and Sarah Reed of Hereford, England, and she came to the States in her early twenties with her brother Alfred. See the Reverend Fordyce Hubbard Argo, *Chapters of Memory*, pp. 64-65 for a brief, sentimental account of Mary.

reserved for my pictures, old china, silver, glass and furniture and other curiosities as my wife during her life or by Will may designate as a Museum Free to the Public.⁵

In many ways, Ryerss Museum has remained unchanged from the early twentieth century. Since its opening to the public on May 13, 1910, cases containing the Ryersses' possessions have been arranged by their material, such as ceramic or glass, or continent of origin, just as Robert Waln Ryerss (1831-1896) had requested. The first floor rooms were used for displays of "pictures, old china, silver, glass, furniture and other curiosities," generally grouped by category. Furniture that was not displayed in the museum or was deemed to be not of museum-quality was stored in the third floor and attic or used by Mary Reed Ryerss Bawn at her gate-house residence at 7442 Oxford Avenue (figure 2). The Museum was designed to showcase a wealthy family's collection of heirlooms and souvenirs of its travels. Mary Ryerss believed she was an extension of that traveling and collecting tradition and continued to collect objects for the Museum until her death in 1916.

The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* reported on August 26, 1904, that Burholme would be open as a park the following summer. The building was modernized between 1905, when Mary Ryerss Bawn moved to the gatehouse on Oxford Avenue, and 1910, when the Museum and Library finally opened to the public. Correspondence between George Wharton Pepper, Esquire Fairmount Park Solicitor, and Thomas Martin, Secretary, indicates that changes were made to the building at this time. Martin's memorandum dated March 22, 1907, states:

The President requests that you will prepare an ordinance to be presented to Councils, requesting the Pennsylvania Company [for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities], as Trustees, to

⁵Will of Robert Waln Ryerss. City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, Will 1896, #325.

pay the Commissioners of Fairmount Park, the sum of \$17,468, to be expended in alterations to the Ryerss House, in Burholme Park, to adapt the same to the uses of a library and museum.⁶

The City of Philadelphia and the Fairmount Park Commissioners did not consider preserving the building as an artifact because it was uncommon to do so. The concept of a house museum as we know it today--a place one visits to learn about architectural and decorative arts history and the generations of a family who lived there--was in its infancy in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Mt. Vernon, home of George Washington became an historic site about 1860 and remained intact under the stewardship of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association because of its association with one of the most important and influential men in American history. Unlike Mt. Vernon, Burholme was less than fifty years old in 1900 and Victorian buildings would not represent a distant past until the mid twentieth century. Philadelphians did not begin to discover their Colonial past through preservation of old houses and interiors until the 1920s, and even then, a house was seldom valued as an intact whole.⁷ Fiske Kimball, Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1925 to 1955, and Henry P. McIlhenny, Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts, furnished Colonial and Early Federal houses in West Fairmount Park as Colonial house museums.⁸ They also acquired American and European interiors to create period rooms in the Philadelphia

⁶Fairmount Park Archives, Ryerss Files. The letter is currently located in the folder labeled, "sensitive documents." As the archives are being reorganized, the exact location of this document may change. Martin's memorandum notes that the ordinance must be presented to, "Councils" plural. Before Philadelphia was rechartered in the Spring of 1919, the City was run by the mayor and "unwieldy . . . two-house, 146-member city Councils." See Russell F. Weigley, (ed.), *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, pp. 563-564.

⁷Stenton, the home of James Logan, administered by the Colonial Dames, is the only house in Philadelphia to have been preserved before the 1920s, having become a house museum in 1899.

⁸The Philadelphia Museum of Art was originally known as The Pennsylvania Museum of Art.

Museum.⁹ In 1937, they first discussed the loan of eighteenth-century Waln family pieces from the Ryeress Museum for the growing collection of Colonial Philadelphia furniture at the Art Museum.¹⁰

A second reason why the Ryeress Museum did not become a house museum is that Robert Ryeress's will indicated he actually wanted the building to be modified: "The house is to be fitted up. . . ." A 1910 article in *The Germantown Guide* explained the remodeling of both the first and second floors of the house: "In altering the house, partitions of brick walls fourteen inches thick were taken down and massive columns substituted to convert eight rooms into two large halls, respectively a museum and library, at a cost of \$17,000, entirely out of the moneys left by Mr. Ryeress for endowment."¹¹ There are as yet no known plans for the house which record these changes. However, because the Fairmount Park Archives are currently being cataloged, such plans may yet be found.

During this 1907-1909 renovation, the walls that divided the entry hall from the parlor and dining room, and the back parlor from the front parlor were removed from the first floor. Load-bearing columns with Ionic capitals replaced the walls, unifying the space and creating an open-plan (figure 3). The decorative ceilings

⁹The curators of other major museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston similarly created period rooms. Private collectors such as Henry Francis DuPont, Electra Havemeyer Webb and others also collected antique American interiors to serve as backdrops for their collections of household furnishings.

¹⁰Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Copies in the Ryeress Museum Files. This information is recorded in correspondence between Joseph Carson, Park Commission President, Fiske Kimball, Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Henry P. McIlhenny, Assistant Curator of the Decorative Arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from April to November, 1937. From notes scribbled onto the last letter, the loan did not happen that year. The loan cards from the Registrar's office at the Philadelphia Museum of Art indicate that the Museum borrowed the pieces in 1940 for a special exhibit, "Life in Philadelphia, 1740-1940" and has never accessioned them but considers them to be their own.

¹¹Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Campbell Collection, Vol. 6, p. 100.

were also removed or covered up, and a dentilated, classical, plaster cornice was added throughout the rooms on the first and second floors.¹² Also, the dark, marble mantelpieces in the back parlor and the dining room were painted white. These changes brought Beaux-Arts detailing to the building, conforming with early twentieth-century ideas of public space, and also allowed the entire Museum area to be easily supervised by one guard.¹³

In the first decade after its 1910 opening, the Museum changed little. Mary Ryerss traveled throughout the world buying items for the Museum with her second husband, the Reverend John Grant Bawn, whom she had married in Grace Church, New York, three years after Robert Ryerss's death.¹⁴ On October 11, 1910, the Reverend Bawn led the City History Society on a tour of the mansion. A writer for *The Germantown Guide* reported:

The Rev. John G. Bawn . . . gave us a brief but very interesting account of a trip around the world made by his wife and himself, during which they had applied themselves and their money in acquiring very many curios to be added to the already large collection, stating that they had sixteen large packing boxes filled with rare objects gathered in Japan and the Far East, for which they could not find room in the mansion. The city should build a fireproof annex to accommodate these, as the Reverend gentleman

¹²Physical probing of the ceiling is necessary to determine if the original remains under the present ceiling. This was not undertaken as part of the 1977 investigation. The ceiling was then only repaired and painted according to the "Evaluation of the Potential for Restoration and Renovation."

¹³Restoration architect Hyman Myers, formerly of Day and Zimmerman Architects, today of Vitetta Group, suggested this concept of needing to minimize staffing as the City's motivation for reconfiguring the rooms in a summer, 1996 conversation. The architect or architectural firm who reconfigured the first and second floor spaces is unknown.

¹⁴Obituary of Mrs. Mary Bawn. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Campbell Collection, Vol. 6, p. 104. The Reverend Bawn was a curate of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on Eighth Street above Spruce Street, today a Greek Orthodox church known as St. George's Cathedral at 256 South Eighth Street. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Helen Perkins Collection, Fox Chase, Vol. 59, 1901-1912, p. 2.

and his noble wife intend very shortly to visit Europe to purchase paintings.¹⁵

A large Buddha and some Japanese temple furniture, which Mary Ryerss Bawn had purchased during her final trip to Asia in 1916, did not fit in the building.¹⁶ John G. Bawn wrote to the Fairmount Park Commissioners on January 30, 1917, describing these large items:

Gentleman. I beg to inform you that there are now in the U.S. Customs House, Philadelphia, awaiting delivery, some seven cases of articles, purchased by Mrs. Mary R. Bawn in Japan as follows, 1 Large, life size sitting heathen image of a Buddha. . . 1 pair ornamental Antique bronze Lanterns, each 7 feet high, 1 Large Japanese Temple Hanging Lantern, 1 Large wooden Temple Drum, used by priests.¹⁷

Notably, the Reverend Bawn was already lobbying for an addition to the building in 1910 before these large items were ever purchased. In other correspondence dated 1917 and 1918 between the Reverend Bawn and the Fairmount Park Commissioners, Bawn argued that because the Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities so "tenaciously" held on "by every means in its power, to every dollar of the Residuary Fund," he and the other heirs of Mrs. Bawn's estate had decided that they supported the City's asserting full control of the fund provided "that the city will at once spend a reasonable amount from that fund in the erection of an Addition to the present mansion in "Burholme Park."¹⁸ He had already written from 7442 Oxford Avenue on January 23, 1917, to

¹⁵Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Campbell Collection, Vol. 6, p. 100.

¹⁶Mary Ryerss Bawn died of pneumonia in Peking, China on December 18, 1916. She is buried in the Ryerss family plot at Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia.

¹⁷Fairmount Park Archives, Ryerss Files, "Sensitive Documents."

¹⁸Fairmount Park Archives, Ryerss Files, "Sensitive Documents," Letter Dated, December 3, 1917.

the "Honorable Commissioners of Fairmount Park" to inform them of Mary's death and to entreat them to build an addition to Burholme. "These last gatherings, together with her valuable miscellaneous collection stored in her own home, she ardently hoped would strongly appeal to, and encourage the Park Commissioners to carry out their positive promise made to her, of enlarging the Ryerss Mansion. . .

. "19

The Reverend Bawn won his case in 1921 when the Fairmount Park Commission held a competition for the design of a museum wing on the north end of the building. The entry submitted by the architectural firm of Zantzinger, Borie and Medary, dated June 13, 1921, remains in the Fairmount Park Archives.²⁰ A comparison study of the competition drawings with the wing indicates that the firm won the competition. This two-story addition is now attached to the house. The service wing of the house, which contained the kitchen was demolished to build the museum. In so doing, the back parlor and library above were altered by removing a north window on the first floor and adding doors in the northwest corners of both rooms leading to the new wing.

Thereafter, the Museum changed little from 1922 to 1974 primarily because the public library, housed on the second floor in the space that had been two large bedchambers, a passage, and a library, was a branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia until 1955. The librarians' job descriptions included, "running the museum in their spare time."²¹ A newspaper clipping dated August 2, 1945, from

¹⁹Fairmount Park Archives, Ryerss Files, "Sensitive Documents." The emphasis is the Reverend Bawn's.

²⁰Clarence Clark Zantzinger (1872-1954), Charles Louis Borie, Jr. (1870-1943), and Milton Bennett Medary, Jr. (1874-1929) comprised the architectural firm also responsible for the design of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This winning drawing seems to be the only survivor from the competition.

²¹Institutional History Files, Ryerss Museum and Library.

the local paper, *The Northeast Breeze*, preserved in a "History of Burholme" scrapbook at the Ryerss Museum notes, "Miss McKee, Librarian, also acts as museum guide when time allows." The librarians' duties apparently included making an annual inventory of the collection. Unfortunately, these inventories were not conducted systematically which probably accounts for some of the losses to the collection. In addition, lack of adequate shelving in the museum storage areas rendered it impossible to be certain exactly what was in storage (figure 2). Finally, the museum storage areas in the attic were generally accessible to a wandering, visiting public.²²

What has changed in the Museum is the creation on the first floor of two period rooms representing the front parlor and the dining room. These period rooms were instituted by the Friends of Burholme, founded in January, 1974, and led by community resident and head librarian, Joan Wagner. The Friends worked diligently to raise money and accepted donations of Victorian furniture. The Friends also attracted enough attention to the mansion that when the City budgeted money to Fairmount Park houses in connection with the Bicentennial Celebrations, funds were allocated to Ryerss Library and Museum for restoration and renovation.²³ The fact that Larry Campbell, husband of librarian Mary Lou Campbell, was the Deputy Managing Director for the City of Philadelphia may have encouraged this allocation.²⁴

²²This is according to the institutional legends as recounted by Mary Lou Campbell.

²³The official name of the institution The Robert W. Ryerss Library and Museum indicates that the Museum has traditionally been less important than the Library. The institution is in need of new stationery with updated address and telephone information. As the Museum function is becoming more important to the community, perhaps the institution should be officially known as the Robert Waln Ryerss Museum and Library. Attaining grant money could be easier with this change in focus of the name.

²⁴Conversation with Mary Lou Campbell, Summer, 1996.

These two period rooms and the back parlor would be central to creating a more authentic representation of the house's past appearance. However, for the average visitor to Ryerss Museum today there is no interpretation of either the building or the family history. Interpretation is difficult because of a problematic restoration begun in 1978, during which portions of the ground floor were "returned" to the Victorian era. For example, a piece of wall was installed at the base of the staircase to support a donated mirror, and inoperable pocket doors were installed between the parlor and the back parlor because the architects knew that the doors had originally existed.²⁵ Despite these Victorian touches, the columns installed c.1907 remain, so the overall effect is of the early twentieth-century alterations. The historic kerosene lighting fixture at the base of the stairs was also electrified and restored. Most visitors believe this "recreation" is the original appearance of the interior until told otherwise. The layers of Victorian decoration which had accumulated in the house from the 1860s to the 1890s and which are documented in c.1900 photographs are all but missing in the museum today. As noted, they were removed to conform to the early twentieth-century concept of a museum as a formal public space, open and white.

There are no household inventories for Burholme, but the photographs of the house at the turn of the twentieth century are so complete it would be possible to recreate the parlor, the back parlor, and the dining room on the first floor to that time. Whether recreation is an appropriate action is discussed in the Conclusion. The first step in developing an interpretation for the period rooms is to examine the family history.

²⁵The large pier mirror was donated by an antique dealer who was a friend of Hyman Myers, the architect.

Chapter II

History of the Ryerss Family and Burholme, Their Suburban Summer House

Joseph Waln Ryerss (1803-1868), the builder of Burholme, was born May 10, 1803, in New York City (figure 46). He was the son of John P. Ryerss of Staten Island, New York, and Hannah Waln, daughter of Richard Waln (c.1737-1809) and Elizabeth Armitt (d.1790), of Walnford, in Monmouth County, New Jersey.²⁶ Joseph's parents were married at Walnford on October 28, 1797, by the Reverend Andrew Hunter.²⁷ Joseph earned a living as an importer/exporter in the shipping firm of Lincoln and Ryerss, having learned the trade from his uncle, Jacob Shoemaker Waln (1776-1850).²⁸ He was later President of the Tioga Railroad, a position that probably enabled him to have a private railroad station on his property, today known as the Ryers station on the Southeastern Pennsylvania

²⁶Hannah Waln and John Ryerss had four children according to *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, p. 211: Adrian, Eliza, Elizabeth, and Joseph. Adrian is probably the Cozen, or Gozen Adrian Ryerss who died July 2, 1866, aged 69 years and is buried in Joseph's plot at Laurel Hill Cemetery. Elizabeth married Thomas Smith. Deed ADB, Book 9, pp. 543-556 at the Philadelphia City Archives details a business transaction between Thomas Smith and Joseph Ryerss. It describes land near Steuben, New York, that was patented to Joseph Ryerss' grandfather Gozen Ryerss in 1792.

²⁷Genealogical Data and Correspondence Relating to Old Philadelphia Families Printed in the North American, Vol. 51, p. 77.

²⁸The firm Lincoln and Ryerss may have been based out of New York City as I have found no record of Lincoln and Ryerss in Philadelphia. An 1824 letter in the Ryerss Museum collection, dated May 16, from Joseph to one of his uncles, possibly Jacob Shoemaker Waln, details his experience surviving a steam boat explosion. Joseph wrote that the incident took place near "Elizabeth Town," probably Elizabeth, New Jersey as the boat had sailed from New Brunswick. The postscript of the letter states that he was to be in New York for a month, supporting the theory that his early business interests were in New York. He is, however, conducting business in Philadelphia several years later. The DeSilvers Directory lists "J. W. Ryerss, merchant, 33 S. Wharves, house 233 Walnut and Waln, Locust Street wharf Schuylkill," for the years 1829-31. See *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Vol. 1, p. 214 for a discussion of Jacob Shoemaker Waln.

Transportation Authority R8 line to Fox Chase.²⁹ Joseph's obituary, pasted on a page of Anne Waln Ryerss's Bible, also noted that he was president of the Philadelphia Exchange.

On June 3, 1830, at Waln Grove, the Reverend William White of Christ Church, and the Episcopal Bishop of Philadelphia, married Joseph Waln Ryerss (1803-1868) and Susan Waln (1806-1832).³⁰ Susan was born September 12, 1806, daughter of the Honorable Robert Waln, Junior (1720/1-1784), and Phebe Lewis Waln (1768-1845), of Waln Grove near Frankford (figures 51 & 52).³¹ The couple

²⁹The McElroy's Directory of 1854 is the earliest one to list Joseph as president of the Tioga Railroad, with his business address at 25 Merchant's Exchange. The Tioga Railroad and Coal Company was incorporated April 12, 1828 and organized by Aaron Bloss and John H. Knapp of Tioga County, Pennsylvania, and Robert E. Griffith of Philadelphia. The proposed route for the company was from "Peters Camp Coal Mines to the New York state line near Lawrenceville at canal." It was a "paper railroad," which may mean that the tracks were never actually built. See Thomas T. Taber, III, *Railroads of Philadelphia, Encyclopedia and Atlas*, p. 245. The City of Philadelphia dropped the final "s" of Ryerss for the local street name and for the railroad station.

³⁰This marriage certificate survives in the collection at the Ryerss Museum.

³¹A portrait of Robert Waln's federal-style mansion, Waln Grove, hangs in the stairwell at the Ryerss Museum. It was a brick mansion with wings at either end, suggestive of oval or octagonal rooms. Robert Waln's early nineteenth-century portrait, attributed to Jacob Eicholtz, hangs in the parlor. This likeness was engraved by Samuel Sartain and included in the *Lives of Eminent Philadelphians*, published in 1859 by Henry Simpson in Philadelphia. The Ryersses' copy of this book has been loaned indefinitely to the Fairmount Park Archives at Memorial Hall. Phebe and Robert Waln were married at the Pine Street Meeting House on October 10, 1787. He was twenty-two years and eight months old; she was nineteen years and four months old. Robert Waln, Jr. died January 24, 1836, of an inflammation of the bowels. Phebe Lewis Waln was born May 17, 1768 and died April 16, 1845, of an inflammation of the lungs. She is wearing a Quaker cap in her portrait, possibly by Thomas Sully, which hangs in the parlor today. While the Ryersses were Episcopalians, Anne's Quaker cultural heritage somewhat dictated their interests, attitudes, and tastes. Anne and Robert Ryerss were both active in the founding of the SPCA chapter in Philadelphia, and Anne set aside \$40,000 plus a \$30,000 endowment to found an animal infirmary in her will. David Hackett Fischer implies that this love of and appreciation for animals and all creatures was highly valued by Quakers. See David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, p. 553. Clippings in Anne Ryerss' scrapbook and her pet cemetery reveal her deep belief that animals should not be overworked and that animals have souls. Anne Ryerss stated in her will, "I direct Robert Waln Ryerss to purchase a charter for it [The Ryerss Infirmary for Dumb Animals], containing a clause, providing that if at anytime, vivisection, or any Medical or surgical experiments shall be practiced upon any animals, therein; said charter will be forfeited, and the property of said Corporation, shall go to, and become the property of the 'Society of Friends' for a Home for the instruction of the 'Indian Race' . . ." City of Philadelphia Register of Wills, 1886, #1347, p. 2.

were second cousins once removed. They had one child, Robert Waln Ryerss, born March 8, 1831 (figure 48).³² Susan died on July 21, 1832, only a year and four months after Robert's birth. Joseph then married Susan's younger sister, Anne Waln (1813-1886), on September 30, 1847, at Saint Mark's Church in Frankford (figure 47). The Reverend Henry Spackman officiated. Anne was the youngest daughter of Phebe and Robert Waln, born September 6, 1813.³³ The docents at the Ryerss Museum are fond of telling visitors, "Robert was raised by a stepmother, who was also his aunt and also his cousin."

No family diaries or accounts of life at Burholme survive except for Anne Waln Ryerss's scrapbook, which contains a plethora of newspaper clippings, many of them sentimental verses about home, or articles that reveal her devotion to animals. The Ryersses were part of Philadelphia's social elite, maintaining a city address at 922 Walnut Street and probably traveling to Burholme by carriage for weekends and summer holidays. The six-bedroom house may have once been full of guests who visited regularly to enjoy the horses and dogs, the views from the house, and the country air.³⁴ Joseph Ryerss died of angina on January 21, 1868, nine years after he commissioned the building of Burholme. He was buried at

³²John W. Jordan (ed.), *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Vol. 1, p. 225 states that Robert was born March 8, 1831 or 1832. The 1870 Census lists him as thirty-nine years old, and he was sixty-four in February, 1896 when he died, just before his sixty-fifth birthday; therefore he was born in 1831. His tombstone also states that he was born in 1831.

³³Ryerss Museum, Ryerss Family Bible, loose pages marked, "Family Record."

³⁴It was customary for servants' quarters to be located over the service wing of the house. A c.1922 photograph of the service wing as workers were preparing to build the rear addition shows that there was a full second floor above the kitchen. This two-story building replaced an earlier frame building c.1888. See Franklin Fire Insurance Policy #28589. Curiously, c.1976 photographs of the interior at Burholme prior to the renovations show that there was a call bell at the top of the stairs in the third floor, above the door to the south room with the arched window. Therefore exactly where the servants slept and the number of rooms available for guests is debatable.

Laurel Hill Cemetery in the adjoining plots which he purchased for his family on June 5, 1855.³⁵

Four years after buying his cemetery lot, Joseph Waln Ryerss purchased the land for his more outstanding monument, Burholme. On January 1, 1859, Joseph Waln Ryerss (1803-1868), gentleman, of Philadelphia bought eighty-two acres and seventeen perches in Fox Chase from Joseph Jeanes, also a gentleman, of Philadelphia, for \$17,533.92.³⁶ Ryerss simultaneously acquired three acres, thirty-nine perches and eighty-eight one-hundredths of a perch on contiguous ground from Joshua T. Jeanes, Merchant, for \$812.31.³⁷ On April 11, 1859, Joseph Ryerss again added a smaller piece to his tract of land by purchasing ten acres and sixteen perches from Isaac A. Davis for \$4,400.³⁸ His ninety-seven acres cost a total of \$22,746.23.

In the winter of 1859, on the primary parcel, Joseph commissioned a country estate "Burholme," which he named for the Waln ancestral village in

³⁵The family burial site at Laurel Hill Cemetery (Section five, plots 75 and 76), the choice burial site of Philadelphia's social elite, is another artifactual indicator of the Ryerss families' high social status. Their enclosure, located at the top of the hill overlooking the Schuylkill River, makes a public statement about how financially successful they were. Surrounding the Ryersses' plot were those of other Philadelphians who made their fortunes as merchants, or through investments in railroads and coal mines. The stones of the six family members buried in the plot also speak to the values of the deceased. Susan Waln Ryerss, who was moved from the Friends Cemetery in Frankford, has a plain, simple stone with only her name and years of birth and death. Anne Waln Ryerss's stone matches Susan's. Joseph and Robert, however, have taller stones with Celtic crosses. Joseph's had carved ivy on the cross, which has been recently conserved by John Carr. Mary Ryerss Bawn also has a stone with a large Celtic cross. Her stone reads, "All the world was her parish." The sixth person buried in the plot is Cozen Ryerss, probably Joseph Ryerss's brother.

³⁶Philadelphia City Archives, Deed Book ADB 48, pp. 82-84.

³⁷Philadelphia City Archives, Deed Book ADB 48, pp. 85-86.

³⁸Philadelphia City Archives, Deed Book ADB 59, pp. 459-461.

Yorkshire, England.³⁹ The house was probably completed in 1859, because the first fire insurance survey of the house was a \$10,500 policy dated November 12, 1859.⁴⁰

The as yet unknown architect or builder likely adapted a Samuel Sloan design.⁴¹ Sloan was a prominent Philadelphia architect who published hugely popular design manuals of country villas and cottages, many in the Gothic, Italian and Oriental styles. The two-volume book, *The Model Architect*, was published in 1852. There is no evidence for a Sloan commission.⁴² The Ryerss Mansion does not follow any single Sloan drawing in *The Model Architect*, (Philadelphia, 1852) but combines elements found in several designs.⁴³ A Sloanian feature at Burholme is that the carriage house and mansion are designed ensuite, with matching motifs

³⁹John W. Jordan (ed.), *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Lewis Publishing Co., 1911, see p. 200 for a discussion of the English origins of the Waln family. See also appendix G, found with the fragile documents in the Ryerss Collection.

⁴⁰Franklin Fire Insurance Company policy #28589. The dollar figure given is from a June, 1973 photocopy found in the files at the Ryerss Museum that lists all the known fire insurance policies that the Ryerss' owned including ones for their city house at 922 Walnut Street. Policy #28589 is in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, dated September 7, 1872. The original 1859 survey is not housed with it. The 1872 survey includes a description of the back parlor, in effect updating the 1859 survey, and therefore indicating that the back parlor building campaign was completed in 1872.

⁴¹I also explored the possibility that John Riddell could have been the architect. His 1861 publication, *Architectural Designs for Model Country Residences*, lists those houses he had already designed. However, Joseph Ryerss is not listed as a client. Other possibilities to explore are: Stephen Decatur Button and Joseph M. Hoxie. It is possible that no architect was involved in the design of Burholme. Instead, a master builder, who adapted the published designs of Samuel Sloan or another architect, could have been responsible for the plan and decorative details.

⁴²There are no notebooks or letters belonging to Joseph Ryerss that might indicate a commission, nor do the original plans survive. Harold N. Cooleage, Jr. documented all the known Sloan-designed buildings in his 1986 publication, *Samuel Sloan: Architect of Philadelphia, 1815-1884*, and Burholme is not listed.

⁴³A reprint of this publication is now in the circulating collection at the Ryerss Library for reader reference.

of the protruding arch at the base of the roofline.⁴⁴ The interior plan of the carriage house matches one in *The Model Architect*. The overall design and exterior massing of Burholme most closely resembles the Italian villa in plates XXI and XXII of *The Model Architect*, with the full verandah and second floor balcony. Plates XLVIII and XLIX contrast a plain and an ornamented villa. The plain villa is unrusted stucco like Burholme and has a balustrade, rather than a lantern, as the Ryerss Mansion originally did. The only non-Sloanian feature of Burholme is the prominent arch protruding from the roof (figure 1). This form is reminiscent of Joseph Paxton's 1851 design for the Crystal Palace at the World's Fair in London. Joseph Ryerss chose a grand scale for his house, but some of the plainer details, perhaps in deference to Anne's Quaker sensibilities.⁴⁵

After Joseph Ryerss's death in 1869, the coming of the railroad would change the way the family used their country retreat. Only about ten miles from the center of Philadelphia, Burholme became more accessible when the railroad line was laid between 1872 and 1876. This change in transportation allowed the family to spend more time there, traveling by train to Philadelphia and even New York to conduct business.⁴⁶ Notably, Anne and Robert were both counted at Burholme for the summer, 1870 Census. As Burholme had then become a more

⁴⁴Another Italianate villa with a similar roofline stands on East Chestnut Hill Avenue on the south side of the street in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia. An inquiry into the owners and builders of this building could perhaps shed some light on the architect of Burholme.

⁴⁵ Presumably, Anne remained a member of the Society of Friends until her Episcopal marriage to Joseph Ryerss in 1847. Her parents Robert and Phebe Waln remained Quakers until their deaths, and her sister, Susan, was buried in the Friends Cemetery at Frankford.

⁴⁶The Philadelphia and Newtown Railroad was incorporated March 20, 1872 as a name change of the Philadelphia and Montgomery County Railroad. The name was again changed to Philadelphia-Newtown and New York Railroad January 29, 1873. See Thomas T. Taber, III, *Railroads of Philadelphia, Encyclopedia and Atlas*, 1987, p. 468. The railroad line appears on the Ryerss property in a G. M. Hopkins, *City Atlas of Philadelphia*, 1876.

permanent residence, the Ryersses enlarged the house by September, 1872, adding a back parlor with a library above.⁴⁷ These additions rendered the house suitable for what may have been almost full-time habitation by Anne Ryerss.

Anne's desire to add a library to the house was a sign of her wealth, high social status and her education. It contributed a more permanent air to the house.⁴⁸ Another more practical reason for the addition is that the back parlor, smaller than the front parlor and with only one window was more easily heated in winter months than the large parlor. The pocket doors at the bay window and separating the front and back parlors permitted isolation of this space. The front parlor has four, tall, drafty windows, shaded from the Southern sun by the verandah, perfect for cooling the house in summer. Many of Samuel Sloan's designs for grander houses included a library. The library is a sign that Anne wanted to improve her surroundings by dedicating a space for the family's books. However, most of the books that survive with Anne's name inscribed suggest that she mainly read ladies' fiction. Books of sheet music embossed with Anne's name indicate that she also played the piano, a common skill among ladies of the elite.

After Joseph died, Anne may have spent more time at Burholme to be with her beloved animals. Some of the clippings in her scrapbook reveal her devotion to

⁴⁷Franklin Fire Insurance Survey policy #28589, dated September 7, 1872, includes descriptions of the back parlor. The bathroom, entered from the stair landing by the niche, now the elevator shaft, was not added at this time but was part of the original service wing of the house.

⁴⁸Anne was the youngest child of the Honorable Robert Waln, a distinguished businessman and statesman, thus labeling her a lady with high social standing in the community. Usually a woman of her social standing had attended school, although there is no documentation to prove that Anne did so. Robert Waln, her father, and his cousin Jesse "transacted an extensive business as importers and merchants." In 1812 Robert erected a cotton factory in Trenton, New Jersey, and he was also involved in the iron industry at Phoenixville. For several terms, he served as a member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, was a member of City Council, and president of the Chamber of Commerce. He was involved with banks, insurance companies and library companies in Philadelphia. He was a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania and a trustee of the will of Stephen Girard. See John W. Jordan, (ed.). *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Vol. 1, pp. 223-224.

animals, particularly horses and dogs. Anne was especially concerned about old horses that were mistreated and overworked. The following poem was pasted in her book:

A Horse's Petition to his Master:
Going up hill, whip me not;
Going down hill, hurry me not;
On level road, spare me not;
Loose in stable, forget me not;
Of hay and corn, rob me not;
Of clean water, stint me not;
With sponge and brush, neglect me not;
Of soft dry bed, deprive me not;
Tired or hot, wash me not;
If sick or cold, chill me not;
With bits and reins, Oh! jerk me not;
And when you're angry, STRIKE ME NOT.⁴⁹

A newspaper clipping entitled "A Plucky Humanitarian" reported how an unnamed lady in black silk blocked traffic and compelled a driver to remove an injured horse from his cart. It is tempting to think the lady may have been Anne. Other clippings in the book are entitled, "Kindness to Horses" and "Vivisection. A Dog's View of It." In a clipping about "Dog Cemeteries etc.," an unnamed "wealthy lady of this city near Fox Chase" recently buried "one of her favorite hounds of eighteen years." The dog's headstone cost fourteen dollars, and it was laid in a pet cemetery with seven other dogs. The dog cemetery remains near the porch on the west side of Burholme.

In her will Anne designated the "Sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars, to found a Hospital, for ill, aged and injured animals." She also left forty thousand dollars for an endowment to support the organization. She specified that the society be

⁴⁹This poem is from a card pasted into Anne Ryerss' scrapbook, Robert Waln Ryerss Museum. The source of the card is unknown. Its origins may be explained on the reverse side, glued to the pages of the book.

called, "Ryerss Infirmary for Dumb Animals" and that it "must be connected with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."⁵⁰ It is important to understand the family's love of animals in order to appreciate some of the objects in the rooms, like the horse shoe mirror (figure 3) and the portraits of the family horses and dogs, many of which were commissioned during the 1870s. One of these, a portrait of a white horse, Old Grey, was completed in 1873 by Newbold Hough Trotter (1827-1898) (figure 54). Trotter had a varied career and trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He turned to painting full-time after 1867 and was well-known as a painter of animals.⁵¹

Anne died November 17, 1886, of pneumonia.⁵² Robert then made additional changes to Burholme. A fire insurance survey updated October 31, 1888, noted, "The frame summer kitchen has been removed, and a two-story brick kitchen" has replaced it.⁵³ No mention of the tower was made at that time, but a photograph, published in 1892 in *The York Road Old and New*, shows the Moorish, ovoid cupola complete with stained-glass windows where the original balustrade had been.⁵⁴ The tower therefore was probably added to the house between 1888 and 1892. However, a painting of the house, without the tower, was painted in oil on canvas by Anne Ryerss's first cousin Edmund Darch Lewis (1835-1910) in 1875

⁵⁰This organization continues to exist and is today known as the Ryerss Home for Aged Equines, located in Coventryville, Pennsylvania.

⁵¹Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Three Centuries of American Art*, 1976, p.359.

⁵²On the City of Philadelphia Death Register, Anne's address is 922 Walnut, while when Robert dies, his address is Ryerss Station.

⁵³Franklin Fire Insurance Policy #28589.

⁵⁴The Reverend S. F. Hotchkin, *The York Road, Old and New*, p. 422.

(figure 10).⁵⁵ This widens the date range in which the tower could have been added to sometime between 1876 and 1892.⁵⁶ Lewis also painted a landscape view looking South from Burholme entitled *Autumn from Burholme* in 1878. Both paintings remain in the Museum collection.

While Anne had preferred reading fiction, her stepson, Robert Waln Ryerss (1831-1896), collected scientific, historical and theological books. He was well-known as a philanthropist and world traveler. Robert received an A.B. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1851 and a law degree from the same University in 1854. He was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar Association on December 11, 1856. His obituary, published in February, 1896, states:

His father [Joseph Ryerss] was engaged in the East India Trade and amassed quite a fortune. The son, Robert studied law, but he never practiced, as by his father's death he became independently rich. He had an office at 605 Walnut Street, where he transacted business connected with his investments. He was a shrewd businessman, and always put his money where it would bring him good return.⁵⁷

Another account of Robert's character describes him as, ". . . a man of large means and studious tastes. He devoted his time to his home and the management

⁵⁵David Lewis, Edmund Darch Lewis's father, was the brother of Anne Waln Ryerss's mother, Phebe Lewis Waln. A copy of David Lewis's Memoir is in the Ryerss Museum collection. This painting is visible in figure 10.

⁵⁶Perhaps future research on the stained glass and the style of the oak finishes inside the cupola can suggest a more specific date. This portrait of the house depicts an awning striped effect on the metal tent roof over the central second floor window on the front facade. This feature along with the arch-topped shutters which once shielded the third floor, central window from the sun, now in storage in the second floor of the carriage house, should be restored to the building. Also, the photographs of the house indicate that the decorative details on the porch posts, the rustication over the fanlight of the front door, and the panels of the shutters were once multicolored or at least multi-toned. Further investigation into the finishes and paint colors of both the interior and the exterior are needed so that these features can be restored to the paint scheme.

⁵⁷University of Pennsylvania Archives, Robert Ryerss File. It is unknown which newspaper published this obituary and on what day. An archivist had written on the paper on which the newspaper clipping was mounted, "Robert Waln Ryerss, Class 1851--College. Died near Fox Chase, Phila., Feb 16, 1896."

of his estate. He loved Burholme and was generally to be found there when not traveling."⁵⁸ Robert's pocket-sized traveling Bible is in the Ryerss Museum collection. Inside the cover of the small book, he listed cities visited during an 1894 trip. On March 4, he was in Cairo. The travels then proceeded as follows: Jerusalem, Damascus, Beirut, Constantinople, Vienna, Venice, Geneva, Lucerne, Paris, London, and York. He returned to the United States on July eighth. According to his obituary, he spent the Winter of 1895 in Mexico because of ill-health. It is possible that Robert Ryerss suffered from poor health all his life, explaining why so little is known about his doings. However, based solely on the diary below, this is a large leap. Thomas P. Cope briefly mentions the Ryerss family and Robert specifically in his diary in the year 1850:

July 13th. In our morning's ride, we called on the family of the late Jacob S. Waln, School House Lane, and found them very pleasantly situated--the widow had a more healthy appearance than any of the daughters. The wife of Joseph Ryers[s] and his son by his former wife, sister of his present spouse, who has a sickly appearance, were present.⁵⁹

The subheading in Robert Ryerss' obituary reads, "He Did a Great Deal of Good in a Quiet Way. A Recluse Who Gave Freely of His Money, But Spent Most of His Time Among His Books, His Horses and His Dogs."⁶⁰ Robert learned from Anne to love and care for animals. In his will he left to his wife, Mary, the care of "all my pet dogs and horses, to be kept by her at Burholme as long as they live, the horses not to be worked."⁶¹ He also specified that all the animals die a natural

⁵⁸*Philadelphia Record*, May 21, 1905, Robert Waln Ryerss Museum, Back Cover of Anne Waln Ryerss Scrapbook.

⁵⁹Eliza Cope Harrison (ed.), *Philadelphia Merchant: The Diary of Thomas P. Cope*, p. 594.

⁶⁰University of Pennsylvania Archives, Robert Ryerss File.

⁶¹Will of Robert Waln Ryerss, 1896, #325.

death. He served as President of the Ryerss Infirmary for Dumb Animals until August 3, 1895, and he served as President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals from 1885 until his own death in 1896. He was eulogized in the *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*: "To our Society, he was a generous friend, wise in counsel, prompt in beneficence, progressive in his ideas, strict in the performance of duty, exact in all business details and honorable in every act."⁶²

Little is known about Robert Ryerss's social life, other than accounts of his reclusive tendencies. A gossip newspaper clipping from Helen Perkins's scrapbook says that Robert was engaged to a Miss Allen of New York in his early youth, but the engagement was broken.⁶³ A reply to an invitation survives at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania that Robert sent from Burholme on June 20, 1876, which reads, "Robert W. Ryerss regrets that he will not be able to accept Mr. Etting's polite invitation for July 1st, Saturday, evening," proves that he was included in society functions.⁶⁴ Also contrary to the idea that he was a recluse, Robert was a member of the Rittenhouse Club from 1875, and was listed among the members of the Social Art Club in 1883. The collection at the Ryerss Museum also includes his certificate of lifetime membership in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and a certificate from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, which states that he gave \$2400 in the memory of Anne W. Ryerss to endow a permanent

⁶²*Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, 1896, p. 15.

⁶³Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Helen Perkins Collection, Fox Chase, Vol. 59, 1901-1912, p. 2. If this is true, it reinforces the Ryerss family's continued social connections to New York City as well as Philadelphia. An Allen family was intermarried with the Walns of Monmouth County, New Jersey. See John W. Jordan (ed.), *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Vol. 1, p. 212.

⁶⁴Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Etting Papers, Vol. 3, p. 71. This was possibly a Centennial-related function.

free bed in the hospital. Anne's will mentions that he served as Treasurer of the same hospital.

Contrary to the charges that Robert Ryerss hardly used his law degree, he maintained an office from 1854, when he received his law degree, until 1887. The Philadelphia City Directories offer a profile of his career. The first listing for Robert Ryerss in Philadelphia was at 250 Walnut Street in the 1854 McElroy's Directory. No profession was given, although this was the year he finished his law degree at the University of Pennsylvania. He was not listed again until 1859, at 233 South Fifth Street; in 1860 he is listed at the same address as an Attorney and Counselor, with his house being at 922 Walnut Street. Beginning in 1861, he shared his office space with another attorney, Z. Poulson Dobson. That partnership apparently ended in 1865 when Robert moved his office to 605 Walnut, closer to his 922 Walnut Street residence. He maintained the 605 Walnut Street office through 1887, when he was fifty-six years of age and just after Anne's 1886 death left him with Burholme as well as the town house in the City.⁶⁵

Despite his extensive trip in 1894, Robert Ryerss was certainly not well during the final decade of his life. That he spent the Winter of 1895 in Mexico because of failing health suggests that he was quite sick. His obituary reported that, "Upon his return, he sold nearly all of his property and disposed of most of his business interests."⁶⁶ Five days after his wedding in the library at Burholme, he wrote his will.⁶⁷ He added codicils to the will on July 15 and October 8, 1895. On

⁶⁵In the 1850, Pennsylvania Census, when Robert was twenty-one, he was listed in Allegheny County (Pittsburgh area) as a laborer.

⁶⁶University of Pennsylvania Archives, Robert Ryerss' File.

⁶⁷One would have expected a church founder such as Robert to have married in the Episcopal church. His poor health is likely why he did not. That the ceremony took place in the library upstairs indicates that he was probably too sick to venture downstairs.

August 3, 1895, he resigned as President of the Ryerss Infirmary because of ill health.⁶⁸ He was certainly failing at this time. According to his obituary, he had suffered from Bright's Disease for the last ten years of his life, dying on February 16, 1896, from "paralysis of the heart."⁶⁹ The modern medical term for Bright's Disease is chronic Glomerulonephritis, which is characterized by hypertension and high blood pressure, leading to a gradual failure of the kidneys and often heart failure.

Robert may have married his housekeeper, Mary Anne Reed, on June 20, 1895, to reward her for more than twenty-five years of service to the Ryerss family, knowing that she would use his money to perpetuate his wishes and his family's legacy of benevolence.⁷⁰ The ceremony was performed in private in the library at Burholme by the Reverend H. William Davidson.⁷¹ The marriage caused quite a stir in the community. In a letter to Frank Willing Leach, Waln genealogist Oliver Hough wrote as an aside at the bottom of his second page:

A dec[endant] of [the] late Hannah (Waln) Ryerss was [the] late Robert Waln Ryerss who left his fine estate called 'Burholme' near Fox Chase (there is a station on the Newtown R. R. named Ryerss) to the City of Phila[delphia] for a park. He created a great scandal by marrying in his old age his housekeeper, a woman of very low birth. But she was good enough to turn Burholme over to the City soon

⁶⁸Ryerss Home for Aged Equines, Minutes 1888-1896.

⁶⁹University of Pennsylvania Archives, Robert Ryerss' File.

⁷⁰Mary's obituary states, "When twenty she came to Philadelphia, and a few years later was employed by Mr. Ryerss as his housekeeper. She remained in his employment for about twenty-five years and then married him in 1895. . . ." Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Campbell Collection, Vol. 6, p. 104.

⁷¹According to a newspaper article, Robert's health was so poor, that he could not go downstairs. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Helen Perkins Collection, Fox Chase, Vol. 59, 1901-1912, p. 2.

after her husband's death, though it had been left to her for life. She mar[r]ied 2. John G. Bawn, a man in her own class of life.⁷²

This passage is a window into how the Philadelphia elite viewed Mary Ryerss Bawn, and perhaps explains, in part, why Philadelphia's well-to-do have forgotten the Ryerss Museum.⁷³ Another reason why Burholme was neglected by the upper classes is simple geography. The neighborhood around Burholme did not prosper, and Philadelphia's elite chose to live in areas like the Main Line and Chestnut Hill.

As mistress of the house, Anne Ryerss's tastes certainly determined the appearance of the interior of the house from the 1860s until her death in 1886. Some of the handmade touches were likely her own. The interior photographs probably depict purchases of the Ryerss family with a layer of decoration added by Mary Ryerss Bawn. Mary must have focused the eyes of the photographer on important objects and arranged the rooms. Her reverence for the Colonial heritage of the Ryerss family was certainly a factor in the images, especially because there are photographs of the portraits of members of the Waln and Ryerss families and of Robert Waln's house, Waln Grove. Many of these were taken with the painting propped up on a chair out on the porch, presumably because adequate light was a problem. Mary also included a portrait of herself in this group of images, as by marriage she inherited the Ryerss family legacy.⁷⁴ Mary was a relatively recent

⁷²Letter, Oliver Hough to Frank Willing Leach, November 25, 1907, cited in the unpublished scrapbook at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Genealogical Data and Correspondence Relating to Old Philadelphia Families Printed in the North American, Vol. 51, p.66.

⁷³The gossip article mentioned above may have done a lot to establish the rumors of a romantic attachment between Robert Ryerss and Mary Reed. However, I believe that if Robert married Mary because of a romantic attachment, he would have done so shortly after his stepmother, Anne's, death in 1888, rather than waiting until 1895. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Helen Perkins Collection, Fox Chase, Vol. 59, 1901-1912, p. 2.

⁷⁴This is another reason why at least some of the photographs must have been taken after 1896, because Mary needed some time before she could have had her portrait painted. The Church of the Holy Nativity at Rockledge has copies of Robert Ryerss's and Mary Bawn's portraits. They claim to own the originals. This may be an issue for future investigation.

immigrant to America and a woman presumably born into the working class.⁷⁵ As she had been a servant to the Ryerss family, she was never received as an equal among the family's peers. To them, Robert Ryerss's marriage to Mary may have represented the disintegration of the family's upper class status. Mary probably viewed her role in society as one of proving that she was worthy of her newly acquired social position. Her new role, as lady of the house and as "curator" for a soon-to-be Museum, gave her a purpose reserved for leisured ladies. In addition to her role at Burholme, Mary donated money in 1897 to the Church of the Holy Nativity in Rockledge founded by Robert Ryerss in 1893 to move the chapel to the rear of the property where it became a parish house. Then, an elaborate, scaled-down replica of the Cathedral of Saint Mary, the Virgin, in Saint Neot's, Huntingdonshire, England was built on the front of the lot at Jarrett Avenue and Huntingdon Pike. This building was completed in 1898. Mary also founded the Robert Ryerss Asylum in Beirut. She used her new-found fortune to help others, continuing the Ryerss family's philanthropic tradition. Presumably, she continued to honor the Ryerss family in the arrangement of the interiors at Burholme.

⁷⁵Mary probably arrived in the United States about 1868 according to a note in Ryerss Museum files. I did not attempt to trace this any further.

Chapter III

The First Floor at Burholme, A c.1900 View

Documenting the Ryerss family history and the changes to the building is the first step in creating a historic context for Burholme. The second step is a systematic analysis of the c.1900 photographs of Burholme for what they reveal about the interiors at that time. This information helps identify some of the Ryerss family's interests, and by extension, those shared by other upper-class families in Philadelphia. The house and its contents are the most tangible parts of the Ryerss family legacy.

Photographs of upper-class Victorian-era domestic interiors were a relatively common phenomenon. However, the genre was not studied by material culture and decorative arts scholars until the 1970s. Best known in field is William Seale for his 1975 publication, *The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917* and George Talbot for his 1976 exhibition catalogue, *At Home. Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920*. The images were captured by both amateur and professional photographers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often with the explicit intention of creating family souvenirs. This was the case with the Ryersses whose photographs were bound in a leather album, four images to a page.⁷⁶ Presumably, families chose to capture the aspects of their homes which they believed were the most attractive or fashionable. The self-consciousness explicit in Victorian photographs of home interiors

⁷⁶This album remains in the collection, but the cover and possibly the first several pages are missing.

demonstrates how families, like the Ryersses, may have deliberately manipulated the composition of objects in a room to present an ideal image of themselves and to highlight their most valued possessions.⁷⁷

A thorough photographic record of Burholme from c.1895-1905 survives in the collection today.⁷⁸ The images include the exterior of the house, the greenhouses, carriage house, garden follies and the overall landscape as well as views of all the major rooms in the house. Although not addressed in this study, on the second floor the two south, front bedchambers and the library were also recorded. As was typical, the bathrooms and kitchen wing were not photographed. This photographic collection offers the most useful information about the fashionably eclectic 1890s appearance of the interiors. The photographs reveal decorative ceilings, wallpapers, the arrangement of furniture and decorative objects, and even some of the technology used in the house.

It is important to know roughly when the photographs were taken as they were not dated. Dating, however, can be an imprecise science. William Seale cautions the viewer of such images:

Because a house was built or occupied at a certain known time does not necessarily mean that the accepted tastes of the intelligentsia, nor the current high style, determined the decoration of its rooms. People can make unpredictable decisions. The architectural worthiness of buildings can never be taken as proof that their furnishings originally approached similar excellence.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Ellen M. Rosenthal, "The Interior View: Photographs of Wyck, 1871-1906," Unpublished Thesis, University of Delaware, 1979, p. 1. We see this self-consciousness in the Ryerss prints, with the same room photographed at different times of day, or with certain objects added, moved or removed from the photographs. According to Gail Winkler, this is also the case in the Annie Schildauer Collection of photographs at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison.

⁷⁸The glass-plate negatives were donated to the Museum about 1972 by Diane Vallee, granddaughter of Mary Ryerss Bawn's niece, Alice J. Vallee.

⁷⁹William Seale, *The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917*, Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1975, p. 12.

Determining when the Burholme photographs were taken is not simple. The exterior views illustrate different seasons thus proving the photographs were not all taken at the same time.⁸⁰ Furnishings were also moved; a small Colonial Revival desk with a scroll and shell rococo revival motif, a gallery top, and cabriole legs appears in the parlor in one image and a bedroom in another (figure 25).⁸¹ Whether this shifting was done for the composition of the photographs or over a period of years cannot be determined. The collection also includes photographs clearly taken after Robert Ryerss's death, when Mary Ryerss was head of the household. These photographs include images Mary would have added such as a picture of her niece, Alice J. Vallee; a picture of Mary in the northwest corner of the library dressed as lady of the house and not as a servant (figure 50); and an image of a woman in a rustic log playhouse with a man who is wearing a clerical collar, probably the Reverend John G. Bawn. An image of the front hall includes two photographs of the Robert Waln Ryerss Memorial Ward at the Lebanon Hospital for the Insane in "Beyrout," which Mary founded after Robert's death (figure 5).⁸² Another small object that may help date the photographs is a small metal and velvet royal crown on a dressing table in the parlor (figure 24). This could have been a souvenir from the 1901 coronation of Britain's Edward VII. It seems certain that most of the photographs were taken after Robert Ryerss died in February, 1896, and a date

⁸⁰In some of the exterior views, which are not illustrated in this thesis, the deciduous trees are in leaf, while in other views, there is no foliage.

⁸¹According to Sandra Lloyd, the Loudoun collection includes a similar block front desk with the same style leaf carving, made in Germantown in the early 1900s

⁸²I have been unable to locate an exact date for the construction of the insane asylum. Knowing this information would better isolate the dates for some of the photographs. There are also three blurred and dark photographs in the collection that appear to illustrate the Ryersses' objects in cases after the 1910 opening of the Museum. These are not included as part of this paper.

closer to 1900 is probably correct for the majority of the glass-plate images. Circa 1900 also makes sense because Mary may have wanted to record the appearance of Burholme as it was prior to 1904 when she relinquished her right to live in the villa by giving the City full ownership of the Estate.

However one photograph, which may be of Robert Ryerss, does suggest that at least some of the images could have been taken prior to his death. The image depicts a well-dressed older man whose face, aside from his long mustache, is not in the picture; he reaches out a gnarled hand to pet a little dog on the steps of the house (figure 32). This could be animal-lover, Robert Ryerss, late in life, suggesting that some of these photographs were taken c. 1895.⁸³ Knowing that his house would be altered as a public museum and library after his death, Robert Ryerss may have decided to memorialize the house he loved so dearly in photographs for posterity, and Mary might have repeated this act over the next several years.

An important question to consider is whether the images were posed or actually illustrate how the family lived. The answer may be both. William Seale says of such interior photographs:

The rooms are a series of moments isolated in time. Lacking color and the third dimension, the photographs are themselves historical fragments. But in nearly every other way they are moments intact, rooms captured exactly as they were while the shutters clicked, and together they provide a compelling tour inside the American home.⁸⁴

Many of the photographs in Seale's book illustrate rooms without people. Upper middle-class Americans were fascinated with the idea of recording their

⁸³In several known images of Robert Ryerss in a small family album and in his oil-portrait, he wore a bushy mustache.

⁸⁴Seale, *The Tasteful Interlude*, p. 10.

living spaces. In the eighteenth century, the interior served as the background for portraits or family activities, as illustrated by the paintings and prints in Elizabeth Donaghy Garrett's *At Home, The American Family, 1750-1870*. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, the interior had become the primary subject of many photographs. Photography allowed for a proliferation of household images. Instead of having one view of their interior painted by an artist, a family could have a whole album full of various views of their home.⁸⁵

If most of the Ryersses' photographs were taken after Robert Ryerss's death in February, 1896, as appears likely, the images capture a house occupied by Mary Ryerss Bawn, world traveler and sometimes not-so-discerning collector. The house was a shrine and the purpose of the decor was display. Every flat surface was covered with objects and every wall was papered with family portraits, pet portraits, house portraits, and travel photographs: the accumulation of several generations of Walns, Ryersses, and finally Bawns (figures 9 & 37). While the interior contained furnishings from Anne and Robert Ryerss, the total effect of the decoration as seen in these photographs most likely reflects the taste of Mary Ryerss Bawn and includes her object choices as another layer of decoration.⁸⁶ The photographs further suggest that while the Ryerss family probably did not employ an interior decorator, a newly emerging profession at the time, they did keep pace with current fashions by adding fashionable items and touches to the house.

⁸⁵Earlier generations of Walns and Ryersses did commission oil portraits of themselves and their pets as well as the Lewis painting of Burholme and a painting of Robert Waln's Waln Grove, near Frankford.

⁸⁶Judging by the items added by Mary Ryerss Bawn, such as the Japanese Buddha and temple furniture, not seen in the photographs because they were not uncrated until after her death, she may have wished to broaden the collection as well as leave her own impression on it. After Mary had moved to the gatehouse, developing the Museum was clearly a high priority for the Bawns, as expressed in the Reverend Bawn's letters to the Fairmount Park Commission and the newspaper articles cited in Chapter One.

Interior spaces were updated by a change in wallpaper or curtains or the addition of a portiere. In a distinctly personal way, the photographs document how the Ryersses wished to display their wealth and taste.

Burholme was essentially a summer house until the 1880s when Anne Ryerss may have lived there most of the year.⁸⁷ Robert Ryerss's obituary noted, "His city home was at 922 Walnut Street until a year ago, when he made 'Burholme' his permanent residence."⁸⁸ Wall-to-wall carpeting and heavy curtains at the windows were probably not part of the original decorating scheme at Burholme which was a country house. It was more important to be current in one's permanent residence than in one's summer home, which may explain the somewhat eclectic mix of the furnishings at Burholme. By the 1890s, some of these furnishings may have been moved from the City house, while some may have continued to be transported seasonally. For example, the tall, narrow, Rococo Revival pier mirror in the parlor at Burholme, which fits awkwardly in front of the window trim, may be an 1860s object from 922 Walnut Street that may have been removed to Burholme when no longer in fashion or when the house was sold after Robert Ryerss's death in 1896 (figure 12).

The photographs also indicate the Ryerss family was generally aware of changing fashions between the time Burholme was built in 1859 to the 1890s. The furnishings included family heirlooms from various styles such as: Queen Anne,

⁸⁷The City Directories continued to list Anne's residence as 922 Walnut Street until 1881. She did not die until 1886, but was not listed after 1881.

⁸⁸University of Pennsylvania Archives, Robert Ryerss's File. An 1896 Bromley *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* shows Charles J. Cohen as the owner of 922 Walnut Street. Interestingly, an 1875 Hopkins *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* shows that 922 Walnut Street was in close proximity to townhouses owned by several other members of the Waln family. In 1887, Gopsill's Directory listed Robert Ryerss, with a house on Second Street Pike, Fox Chase, a law office at 605 Walnut Street, and a house at 922 Walnut Street.

Georgian or Chippendale and Federal, as well as more recent nineteenth-century additions in the Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival and Rococo Revival styles. There was also a Turkish corner in the back parlor. It is impossible to know precisely when each style or individual item was added to the interior. The decor was eclectic by choice or default, because it was a summer residence, and by design in the 1890s, when eclecticism and American "Colonial" furniture were in vogue.

Joseph Ryerss had called attention to his family's English heritage by naming the villa "Burholme" after the Waln ancestral home in Yorkshire, England. Anne Ryerss had emphasized the family's early American origins by including Waln furnishings from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the interior, along with more recent acquisitions. The fashion identified today as Colonial Revival originated in the second half of the nineteenth century, and was especially popular among the descendants of the Colonial elite who, like the Ryersses, possessed family heirlooms.⁸⁹ By the 1890s, "it became increasingly desirable not only to have American antiques but to establish that one's family had been in America long enough to have handed them down."⁹⁰ The Ryersses celebrated their Waln ancestry in furnishing Burholme.

In *The Antiquers*, Elizabeth Stillinger describes Americans' passion for collecting old American furniture. According to Stillinger, the collecting spirit began in New England, the region with the earliest successful settlements. Further, she states "The earliest interest in American antiques stemmed from patriotic or

⁸⁹Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Three Centuries of American Art*, p. 438. The 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia helped popularize the Colonial Revival. Celebrating the Colonial past soothed the open wounds of the Civil War.

⁹⁰Elizabeth Stillinger, *The Antiquers: The Lives and Careers, The Deals, The Finds, The Collections of the Men and Women Who Were Responsible for the Changing Taste in American Antiques, 1850-1930*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1980, p. xiii.

romantic sentiments, or from curiosity about the unfamiliar."⁹¹ At first, collectors were interested in objects for their associations with important historical figures and not necessarily for their design or workmanship.⁹² A second focus of collecting arose from an interest in the art and craft of handmade things. According to Stillinger, "instead of settling for a house full of comfortable and fashionable overstuffed furniture, the collector of American antiques surrounded himself with what were to him beautiful, evocative furnishings of a satisfying extra dimension."⁹³ Then in the 1890s, the era depicted in the photographs of the Ryersses' interior, "collectors of American antiques moved into another phase."

This was the heyday of pleasing furniture groupings and room arrangements. Fanciful Turkish corners, sybaritic Moorish divans, and exotic trappings from other Mediterranean spots transformed fashionable parlors. Pleasure in creating a romantic atmosphere carried over to American antiques, which were sought increasingly by casual collectors to add to the effectiveness of a "colonial" corner or hallway. An old chair or mirror in the front entry, a row of antique plates high on the dining room wall, were thought to lend quaintness and interest to the house.⁹⁴

These decorative themes and components are evident in the interior at Burholme. Certainly, the Ryersses responded to the fashions of their own time as transmitted through shelter magazines and books. Joseph Ryerss owned an 1846 edition of John Claudius Loudon's *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, which may have influenced his choice of the high ground at Burholme, his choice of architectural style, and possibly the interior furnishings of

⁹¹Stillinger, *The Antiquers*, p. xii.

⁹²Stillinger, *The Antiquers*, p. xii.

⁹³Stillinger, *The Antiquers*, p. xii.

⁹⁴Stillinger, *The Antiquers*, p. xiii.

his new house.⁹⁵ Period sources for the 1890s interior, however, are not found among the family's books. The most popular and influential books simply are not there; a careful search through the collection has not resulted in any books by popular late nineteenth-century critics including Charles Locke Eastlake, Clarence Cook, Harriet Spofford, Henry T. Williams and Mrs. Jones, Constance Cary Harrison, or the Beecher sisters.⁹⁶ However, the Ryersses did subscribe to *Harper's Magazine*, and bound volumes from 1856-1912 survive in book storage at the Ryerss Museum. Included among these volumes are articles by Harriet Spofford on the history of furniture. The Ryersses apparently kept pace with fashions in interior decoration through magazines, possibly through their elite circle of friends, and certainly as a result of their penchant for world travel. The photographs tell us that the family was aware of interior fashion.

Several objects in the collection suggest the family attended the Centennial Exposition in Fairmount Park in 1876, where they could have seen the latest trends in decorating including both the Colonial Revival and British Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts Styles. They may have purchased items that later appeared at Burholme at the Exposition. Early inventories of the collection mention a Centennial Medal, of which only the box remains, and a small, flat, wooden souvenir of Memorial

⁹⁵Burholme is a villa. John Claudius Loudon defined a villa in 1833 as, "a country residence, with land attached, a portion of which is laid out as a pleasure ground." For Loudon, the villa's purpose was to display, "wealth and taste." He wrote, "the only essential requisites [for villa ownership] are, that the possessor should be a man of some wealth, and either possess taste himself, or have sense enough to call to his assistance the taste and judgment of others, who profess to practice this branch of the art of design." See John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, 1846 edition, p. 763. The *Encyclopedia* was first published in London in 1833 and continued to be published as late as 1883 in New York. Joseph Ryerss owned an 1846 edition. Most houses of those who could afford it had been sited on high ground for centuries.

⁹⁶The author used the collection at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia for these resources. See the Bibliography for a complete list of these sources consulted.

Hall that was probably manufactured for the Centennial.⁹⁷ The Ryersses also owned two examples of late nineteenth-century furnishings designed in the Colonial Revival style, a small writing desk in the parlor and the sideboard in the dining room (figures 25 & 39).

The following discussion of photographs of the hall, the front and back parlors, and the dining room illustrates how the Ryersses interpreted interior fashion and asserted their family identity through objects and their decorating choices. Period prescriptive household literature is useful for explaining some of the homemade objects and period fashions. Despite the absence of these books in the collection at Burholme, these writings illustrate that the Ryersses' decorative choices reflected the tastes of their time.

Hall

Almost every surface of the hall at Burholme was covered. Furniture lined the walls while paintings, photographs and Turkish brass platters covered them. The paintings were an incongruous mix that included the painting of Burholme by Edmund Darch Lewis, several portraits of family horses and dogs, and many hand-colored, souvenir photographs of the family's world travels (figures 8, 9, & 10).⁹⁸ The largest oil paintings were suspended from hooks on the picture rail. In contrast, the smaller, possibly more recent acquisitions like travel photographs and

⁹⁷This appears to be the type of object that may have had a manufacturer's advertisement on the back. Unfortunately this object is glued to the back of one of the exhibition cases so the reverse side cannot be viewed.

⁹⁸The travel photographs are in excellent condition in third floor storage. Many appear to have been framed at the same time, and several frames are labeled "Gimbels, Philadelphia." Some research on this department store could offer insight into these images and help to date both them and the photographs of Burholme. Perhaps the travel photographs were not only framed in Philadelphia but purchased here as well.

Turkish platters, were hung between and below the larger paintings from screws hidden behind them on the walls, in accordance with the emerging "modern picture-hanging technique."⁹⁹ Other eccentricities of the hall were the antlers displayed over the door to the back parlor, a touch of the horn-style accessories adapted from European and American resorts and hunting lodges, and a suit of armor situated between the pier glass and the parlor door displaying an interest in the Medieval (figures 4 & 11). Armor was a popular late nineteenth-century European "grand tour" collectible. Knick-knacks and souvenirs covered almost every available horizontal surface.¹⁰⁰

Two forms of the Renaissance-revival so-called Savonarola chairs flanked the entry (figures 5 & 6).¹⁰¹ This particular type of chair was recommended by Clarence Cook in his 1877 publication, *The House Beautiful*, wherein he described the chair as "a good chair for a hall."¹⁰² Cook also explained how this chair received its name: "In Mrs. Oliphant's 'The Makers of Florence' there is a pretty cut of Savonarola's cell in the convent of San Marco, showing his desk at which he worked, and, in front of it, a chair similar to this."¹⁰³ Both Savonarola chairs remain in the collection. There were five other arm chairs pictured in the hall. These included a pair of carved Gothic revival-type chairs with leafy, organic

⁹⁹Gail Caskey Winkler and Roger W. Moss, *Victorian Interior Decoration*, Henry Holt, 1986, p. 194.

¹⁰⁰Many of these smaller objects survive in the collection in the Museum wing cases and in storage on the third floor.

¹⁰¹The present configuration of the entry with the vestibule is a product of the 1977 renovation. Hyman Myers added this feature to seal the building because of the then new HVAC system. Myers decided to move the stained glass from over the front door into vestibule to protect it from the elements.

¹⁰²Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881, p. 35 and plate 5.

¹⁰³*ibid.*

designs in the back and fretwork under the arms (figures 7 & 10). A second pair were the so-called "William Penn chairs." According to family tradition Robert Waln acquired these c.1770 fully upholstered Chippendale-style, open arm chairs with carved Chinese-style fretwork on the Marlborough legs and a foliate design on the arm supports (figures 4 & 9).¹⁰⁴ The fifth armchair is another example of a Renaissance revival form with a round wood seat and griffins supporting the arms (figure 9).

Also included was a hall stand, a nearly ubiquitous fixture in the Victorian hall.¹⁰⁵ The Ryersses' tall gilded stand with a large looking glass, photographed with hats and bonnets hanging from its brackets, is not in the collection today.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴These "William Penn chairs" are now in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This "legend" has apparently been passed down by word of mouth and does not specify whether Waln purchased them or received them from a will or gift. Benjamin Chew bought a pair, attributed to Thomas Affleck, now in the collection at Cliveden of the National Trust, at the sale of the Penn family town house that had been owned by John Penn. I did find a reference to the "William Penn Chairs" in a letter from Elizabeth B. McKee, Librarian-in-Charge, to Major Martin, dated February 11, 1935. She wrote, "On April 14, 1931, the Pennsylvania Museum of Art borrowed two of the William Penn chairs of the Ryerss collection and have not returned them as yet." There are no documents to suggest that they were ever returned. William MacPherson Hornor, Jr. mentioned, ". . . the Waln-Ryerss Family . . . owned a pair of French elbow-chairs that are mates to the Affleck-Penn upholstered chairs." *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture*, p. 137. For a photograph and description, see *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, p. 100. The chair on p.100 has square feet. The block feet are not clearly evident in the c.1900 photographs of the hall (figures 4 & 9).

¹⁰⁵Kenneth L. Ames. *Death in the Dining Room*, Temple University Press, 1992, pp. 17-32.

¹⁰⁶What became of the hall stand is unknown. Presumably, Mary Bawn took things with her to set up housekeeping at the gatehouse. There is a snapshot of the Turkish corner, not at Burholme. Possibly, she reinstalled it at the gate house. No other photographs of the gate house interiors are known. Also, Mary may have given some things from the house to the servants. Mary Lou Campbell noted in the late spring, 1979, an eighty-three-year-old, Mrs. Anna Cockeran, was willing to donate a lamp given to a relative of hers when Mary Bawn was disposing of excess possessions upon transferring her estate to the City. In the end Mrs. Cockeran decided she could not part with it. As of 1984, her grandson Louis McKay had the lamp in Horsham. It is the kerosene floor-lamp visible in the c.1900 photographs of the parlor (figures 20, 21 & 23). I visited the Jenkintown home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Dean to see a Renaissance Revival side chair which is said to have once belonged to the Ryersses. The back is not like those shown in the c. 1900 photographs of the parlors. Jack Dean is a retired funeral director, a family business that began with his great-grandfather, John Wesley Dean, who was a cabinetmaker and carpenter in Fox Chase and builder of coffins. Mr. Dean has his great-grandfather's account book which records seasonal carpentry work

To the left of the stand was a carved wooden statue of two men, one standing and one sitting and playing the fiddle.¹⁰⁷ The pedestal for the statue was draped in fabric (figures 4 & 7). A washstand with two carved front panels appeared on different sides of the hall in different images and remains in the collection, but a marble-top sideboard decorated with flowing “C”-scrolls is now in the basement of the parish house at the Church of the Holy Nativity at Rockledge (figure 9). It was bequeathed to the Church by Mary Ryerss Bawn in her will: “I give to the said Church a large mahogany sideboard, for use in the rectory and to be kept there.”¹⁰⁸ The reason for the bequest is unknown. An eighteenth-century, Chippendale-style, marble, slab-top pier table with a carved skirt and knees and claw-and-ball feet, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, stood against the wall on the right side of the hall (figure 8).¹⁰⁹ The Waln family tall-case clock, another important hall icon, remains in the collection (figure 10).¹¹⁰ The hall also included five stands and tables, three in the rustic style; none remains in the collection today.

performed for Robert Ryerss. The pertinent pages have been photocopied and added to the Museum files. Mr. Dean’s grandmother told him that the chair and three others were a gift to their family from Robert Ryerss, which would explain their absence from the c.1900 photographs. Mr. Dean used the chair in his funeral home for years. He and his wife recently refinished and upholstered the chair at Oscar Huber Furniture. Mr. Dean said that writers like Harriett Beecher Stowe and Joyce Kilmer visited Burholme. He said Stowe came while visiting relatives in Cheltenham. He also said that Joyce Kilmer’s poem “The Elms” was inspired by the elm-lined driveway at Burholme.

¹⁰⁷The statue remains in the collection on its original stand. A glass case was fitted for it, probably in the 1910s.

¹⁰⁸Will of Mary A. Ryerss Bawn, Register of Wills, 1917, #300.

¹⁰⁹See *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, p. 147. The PMA researchers mention a William Ryerss in their provenances of the Ryerss’ furnishings. This person never existed. This table may be the “library table” received on loan to the Philadelphia Museum April 6, 1935. Also see William MacPherson Hornor, Jr., plate 131.

¹¹⁰Harriet Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, 1878, p. 186.

Natural light filtered into the hall through the fanlight over the front door and through the doorways to adjoining rooms. A kerosene fixture on the newel post at the bottom of the stairs provided evening illumination in the hall (figure 4).¹¹¹ The Rococo Revival pier glass opposite the stairs was part of a set to which those in the dining room and parlor also belonged (figure 11).¹¹² The placement of this looking glass augmented the light of the kerosene lamps at the end of the hall. The Chinese lantern, suspended from the middle of the ceiling, held one candle (figure 4).¹¹³ The dark woodwork seen in these c.1900 photographs may have been the original grained finish. Paint analysis completed in October, 1977, by Frank Welsh concluded that much of the interior woodwork had originally been grained. Welsh was not asked to identify later layers, but it is possible the interior wood trim at Burholme was still grained in the 1890s. This may have been a detail which the Ryersses chose not to alter although the English household critic, Charles Locke Eastlake, believed "the practice of graining wood . . . is an objectionable and pretentious deceit . . ." because he considered graining fake.¹¹⁴ Harriet Spofford, an American disciple of Eastlake, nonetheless advocated the use of dark, rich surfaces in the woodwork of the hall for doors, staircases, and wainscots in her 1878 book,

¹¹¹This kerosene fixture was found in the attic and was electrified and restored to its location on the newel post as part of the 1977 restoration. It no longer has the rings which held the kerosene fonts. It was "restored" as if it had been a gas fixture and has 1977 glass shades which match the others placed throughout the building at that time.

¹¹²There are parts of similar frames and possibly from this pier glass in storage in the attic. These components need to be assessed to see exactly what remains.

¹¹³Gas and Electric were installed simultaneously as part of the 1907 renovation. The Park Commissioners chose combination fixtures. From 1890 until about 1910 having a gas backup for unreliable electricity was common practice. See Maximilian Ferro and Melissa Cook, *Electric Wiring and Lighting in Historic American Buildings*, New Bedford, MA: AFC, 1984, p.45.

¹¹⁴Charles Locke Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery, and Other Details*, London, 1878, Boston, 1872, p. 42.

Art Decoration Applied to Furniture.¹¹⁵ The graining at Burholme may have conveyed a sufficiently dark appearance so that it was not changed. Eastlake was advocating the avoidance of graining in new houses. In preexisting homes, like Burholme, where soft woods were commonly used for the woodwork, graining was favored over white paint for decoration of the trim.

The original, yellow pine floorboards at Burholme were covered with Oriental grass matting woven in a checkered pattern.¹¹⁶ The matting created a parquet-like appearance for the entry hall, over which prayer rugs and other "India" rugs were laid in accordance with current taste.¹¹⁷ Because hardwood floors were more fashionable than softwood floors, like pine, after 1875, grass matting was considered an economical and attractive floor covering.¹¹⁸ The ceiling at Burholme was decorated similarly to others of the period with a simple set of lines and an abstract plant design expanding outward from the corners. This design would

¹¹⁵Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, p. 187.

¹¹⁶Franklin Fire Insurance Company policy #28589. The 1872 survey indicates that Burholme had yellow pine floors, and the 1910s photograph of the Museum appears to have a wood floor (figure 3). This may be a later hardwood floor that was added as part of the c.1907 renovations. The type and condition of the floor, currently concealed by rotted Olefin Herculon, should be evaluated. This material is usually indestructible; however, because of the leaks caused by the air conditioning system, the woven part of the floor covering, meant to imitate grass matting, has pulled away from its backing. Water may have also seriously damaged the floors beneath. This situation must be stabilized but restoring the floor is not necessary, as true grass matting could be applied over the floor.

¹¹⁷Harriet Spofford recommended that parquet floors with India rugs laid on them for the hall. Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, p. 187. The grass matting may have been used because of its parquet-like appearance, because it was fashionable in its own right, or for seasonal dress, since Burholme was a summer home. A 1906 photograph of Wyck, the Haines home in Germantown, shows the very same grass matting with oriental rugs on top. Rosenthal, *The Interior View, Photographs of Wyck, 1871-1906*, figure 24.

¹¹⁸Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *American Women's Home, or Principles of Domestic Science, Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful and Christian Homes*, J. B. Ford and Co., 1869, p. 86.

likely have been executed in primary hues, as recommended in the 1890s.¹¹⁹ It is possible that the decorative ceilings and borders were updated in the 1880s or the 1890s as the wallpaper in the parlors reflected the taste of the latter decade. The walls and ceiling were essentially a white or pale color, with a border under the cove molding similar to the wallpaper border in the parlors but with a more delicate design. Some decorative details were picked out in darker paint, including a stripe in the crown molding, dentils along the picture rail, moldings in the brackets over the stairs, and in the design on the ceiling (figure 4).

Parlors

The parlors, like the hall, were stuffed full with a mixture of various styles. In contrast to the hall, the parlor furnishings were arranged in “conversation groups” rather than along the walls. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, knick-knacks and textile embellishments were as important to the mood of a room as was the furniture.

The furnishings of the two contiguous parlors illustrates the eclecticism of the 1890s. Elements of the British Aesthetic Movement, like the Turkish corner, Oriental rugs, and ottomans, were combined with elements of the Colonial Revival, such as the use of eighteenth-century Chippendale-style chairs and family portraits. Furniture in the Gothic, Elizabethan and Rococo Revival styles added to the mix. There was no longer one correct style of furnishing as Harriet Spofford demonstrated in her articles for *Harper's Bazaar* and in the first chapters of her book, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*. The Ryerss family adopted this fashion for diverse furnishings. As mentioned earlier, the Ryersses may have had a regular

¹¹⁹Winkler and Moss, *Victorian Interior Decoration*, p. 192. See pattern “E.” *Victorian Interior Decoration* is in the circulating collection at the Ryerss Museum and Library.

flow of old furniture from 922 Walnut Street to Burholme throughout the 1860s, 70s and 80s. The eclectic look came naturally to Burholme.

The two parlors were treated as two distinct rooms, although designed to relate to one another. They shared the same embossed metallic wallpaper pattern but in slightly different hues. Therefore the rooms were united by pattern and border and distinguished by color palette, with the back parlor being darker. The front parlor paper had an oyster white background, and the shading in the stylized plant-like design was created by dots and lines of metallic paint applied to the paper, primarily in silver. The background of the back parlor paper was a creamier, more yellow color, and the design was primarily created by applied copper and gold, with the stylized, plant-like design colored darker than the background.¹²⁰ Each parlor paper had a coordinating frieze at the top of the wall, another feature fashionable by the 1890s. The scrolling acanthus-like leafy design of the paper was bordered by egg-and-dart and dentil designs at the top and a beading and acanthus leaf combination at the bottom (figures 14& 21). The parlors shared other details as well: the windows in both parlors had sheer curtains with lace borders, and both rooms had grass matting, woven in a striped pattern, which was wall-to-wall under the Oriental rugs (figures 22 & 35). It is also likely that chairs moved from one room to the other as needed.

Front Parlor

The front parlor, which functioned as a formal entertaining room or drawing room, was lighter in its overall color scheme and lacked heavy curtaining at the windows. The windows were decorated with landscape-printed translucent, roller

¹²⁰Samples of these and other papers from the bedchambers survive in a trunk stored on the third floor.

shades and sheer curtains with lace borders along the inner and bottom edges. The curtains hung from rings on heavy brass rods with ball finials. The pole supports were attached to the window frame (figures 12 & 13).¹²¹ Spofford wrote about the seating in rooms such as the Ryersses' parlor:

The seats of the drawing-room must be deep and luxurious ones, what-ever be the style of their woodwork; and there must be varying chairs of the light fanciful kind, easily moved about . . . and those whose gilded rods give brightness; while sofas, lounges, chairs, ottomans, and all their sort, with the circular divan and its round tufted back where there is room for it, and various footstools and hassocks inviting the lingerer, are to be provided in profusion.¹²²

The formality of the room was also established by the structured arrangement of the seating furniture and tables throughout the room. Tables anchored the north and south ends while the overstuffed chairs were placed on either side of the fireplace. The front parlor featured a divan in the northwest corner and a plethora of chairs including several types of armchairs. Some of the chairs were embellished with tassels and fringe with printed fabric inside the chair and solid-color velvet on the outside surfaces, upholstered in scrolling leaf-and-flower printed fabrics somewhat suggestive of the wallpaper pattern. On the chairs embellished with tassels and fringe, pairs of tassels were located at the corners of the backs and on the fronts of the arm rolls and tasseled fringe was fitted around the bottom of the chair. The backs of these tasseled chairs were printed with oval

¹²¹Evidence of the curtain hardware probably remains over the parlor windows.

¹²²Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, p. 219.

medallions, one portraying a man in eighteenth-century dress with a falcon and the other a woman (figures 12, 14 & 15). The chairs without medallions and fringe were dressed with throws over the backs and pillows. None of the stuffed chairs remains in the collection. Near the tasseled chairs was a marble miniature of a Greek tholos on a draped, oval marble-top, Elizabethan Revival table (figure 12). In another view of the room, a statue of an equestrian in Arabian costume placed on a c.1880 pedestal occupied the same position as the table and tholos just described (figure 14). Both the statue and pedestal as well as the tholos remain in the collection.

There were several types of side chairs in the parlor. Early nineteenth-century, rush-seated fancy chairs were gilded on the turnings of the legs, stretchers and crestrails. Four remain in the collection, all in need of restoration. A pair of these chairs, one dressed with a pillow, flanked the lighthouse clock in front of the Rococo Revival pier glass on the south wall, and two more were included in the primary conversation areas near the stuffed chairs (figures 12 & 22).¹²³ The eighteenth-century Philadelphia,

¹²³These fancy chairs have little balls in the rails of the backs. Furniture scholars often attribute this feature to New York. These are an off-white color, adding to their light effect. I found three of these chairs and another similar one in poor condition, but with what appears to be their original finish, in the attic, where other stuff had accumulated around them. I removed them to third floor storage; however, restoration is required to use these in the interpretation of Museum spaces. One is missing a leg. Also in the attic are fragments of gilded scrollwork like that used on the tops of large mirrors. This needs to be examined and potentially matched to objects in the photographs, now missing, such as the pier mirror that was originally at the base of the steps. The lighthouse clock, still in the collection, has a velvet covered lower and has a small oil lamp inside the face so that it could be lit in the evening.

Chippendale-style chairs completed the conversation areas and were placed in the western corners of the room, angled towards the mantelpiece (figures 16 & 18). These chairs are currently on permanent loan to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.¹²⁴

In front of the pier glass and the lighthouse clock was a square, marble-top, Rococo revival table with “C” scrolls decorating the apron and scrolled feet. The kerosene owl lamp was the focus of a still-life, composed on the table top (figures 16 & 17). The table, the lamp, and most of the objects on it survive in the collection today. Under the table was a homemade olive green, wool, needlework ottoman with a floral medallion on the top, that remains intact today (figure 16). This small footstool is about one foot square, without casters, and is slightly smaller than a similar embroidered ottoman with casters described by Henry T. Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones in their 1878 publication, *Beautiful Homes*: “The foundation of

¹²⁴There were four side chairs of this Queen Anne/Georgian type with shells and scrolls across the top of the backs in the Ryeress collection. The compass seat and rounded high back are characteristic of Queen Anne chairs, while the carved decoration, pierced splats and claw-and-ball feet are characteristic of Georgian or Chippendale-style design. The chairs probably date from c.1755. The Philadelphia Museum has numbered them 10-1940-1 through 4. A receipt, signed by Ryeress Librarian, Miss E. B. McKee, survives in the Ryeress Museum files indicating that at least two of the “Queen Anne side chairs” were included in the Philadelphia Museum’s exhibit, “Life in Philadelphia 1740-1940.” The four are actually two pairs as there are two types of pierced splats. One of each pair has “original” needlework upholstery with an allover floral pattern, and the remaining two have Victorian needlework seats, with central designs of a parrot, and a stag’s head on solid backgrounds. William MacPherson Horner, plates 41 and 72, illustrate the chairs with the “original” needlework seats, and plate 326 shows the Victorian flower and parrot needlework design. Also from the Ryeress collection, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is a William and Mary High Chest, 10-1940-11. I have not included the c.1900 photograph of this chest in this paper, as it was on the second floor stair landing by an air duct.

this ottoman is a pine box, fourteen inches high and two feet, four inches square A thickly tufted cushion covers the top, and is finished on the side with a wide puff and lengthwise plaited strips."¹²⁵ The Ryersses' piece is a smaller, simplified version of this project that added a fashionable arts and crafts touch to their parlor.¹²⁶

Balancing the still-life on the marble-top table at the south end of the parlor was another table and lamp at the north end of the room (figure 18). This Elizabethan revival, round center table, no longer in the collection, was draped in a stiff-looking fabric, possibly silk taffeta, weighted at the corners by tassels. A large, porcelain kerosene lamp, painted with daisies, was the tallest object on the table. Glass baskets, a goblet, and numerous small objects completed the vignette.¹²⁷ A portiere hung at the doorway to the back parlor, and a long curtain rod, still in the collection, may be the original curtain pole.¹²⁸ This method of hanging curtains with brass rings on

¹²⁵Williams and Jones, *Beautiful Homes*, p. 261.

¹²⁶It is interesting to note that in the 1990s, one hundred years later, it is again fashionable to furnish one's house with eclectic furnishings and do craft projects, like painting one's furniture to look old, and to collect objects like Grandma had to make one's house homey. Martha Stewart and Harriet Spofford seem to be filling a similar role in popular culture, a century apart.

¹²⁷The lamp is no longer in the collection but is of a common type. The glass objects do survive.

¹²⁸A heavy brass rod with round finials, seen in the second floor of the carriage house by the author in 1997, looks to be about the same length as the width of the pocket door opening.

a rod was described by Cook in *The House Beautiful* as being the “only sensible way to do it.”¹²⁹

The Ryersses followed Harriet Spofford’s dictum that if there were no separate music room, a piano should be included in the drawing room furnishings.¹³⁰ A heavy turned leg, barely visible, situates the piano on the west wall near the easel (figure 13).¹³¹ The easel, located beside the parlor door, displayed two rather large framed pieces. Nearby, an Eastlake-style curio cabinet held glass baskets and urns on the top, as well as porcelain and a tea service within. The glass remains in the collection, but the cabinet does not. Flanking the cabinet were a pair of Venetian opalescent glass wall sconces with reflecting glasses that match the Murano chandeliers and sconces in the dining room and parlor. Only one remains intact.¹³² A small basin stand with griffins on the legs and a child’s bow-back Windsor chair appear in the photographs and remain in the collection (figure 15).¹³³ At the

¹²⁹Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful*, 1881, p. 131.

¹³⁰Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, p. 219. The leg of the Ryersses’ piano was against the west wall of the parlor and is visible in figure 13.

¹³¹The piano on exhibit today was donated to the Ryerss Museum in the 1970s or early 1980s. The Ryersses owned a similar style piano which is stored in the basement.

¹³²The other mirror is in reasonably good condition, but the pieces of decorative glass that surrounded it have broken off and are in storage.

¹³³This same chair appears in photographs of both the front and back parlors and in different positions (figures 15, 23, 28 & 33). The chair is also illustrated in Hornor’s *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture*, plate 482. Plate 442 of the *Bluebook* is a c.1785 early federal round looking glass or girandole, with a concave frame, an eagle and laurel-like leaves above, with a baroque shell and Rococo scrolls below. This looking glass survives in the collection in tact, but in

periphery of the room, the photographs illustrate a pair of Elizabethan Revival corner what-nots, or etageres, in the corners at the south end of the parlor (figures 12 & 16). Rococo Revival side chairs were found at some of the windows and also in the center of the room (figures 14 & 27). Other curiosities that furnished the parlor were the horse shoe mirror inside the northwest door to the room (figure 21) and the Waln family “German kitchen,” a diorama of a kitchen with a doll and all the appropriate accessories along the west wall (figure 23). A Chinese-inspired, stick-style table holding a four-branch candelabra appeared on both the east and west sides of the room in different images (figures 12 & 20). Generally, most of the family portraits hung in parlor: Joseph Ryerss over the mantelpiece, Anne to the left, and Robert to the right. The other Walns were on the west wall, with Phebe at the center and Robert Waln to the left of her portrait.¹³⁴

The parlor furnishings at Burholme emulated the description of a parlor offered by Harriet Spofford in 1878:

. . . little mirrors and girandoles are immensely illuminating, and . . . increase the brilliancy of the room. . . . The last pictorial acquisition leaning on the easel, open to study, gives a pleasant addition. . . . The davenport, the etagere, the corner shelves, all help to fill the room and give it the air of occupancy and use and agreeable life.

need of stabilization. It does not appear in any of the c.1900 photographs of the interiors, yet clearly belonged to the Waln and Ryerss family and was used at Burholme.

¹³⁴The corner etageres, the Rococo Revival side chairs and the stick-style tables are no longer in the collection; however, the horse shoe mirror, kitchen diorama and family portraits do survive.

Provided there is space to move about, without knocking over the furniture, there is hardly likely to be too much in the room.¹³⁵

In fact, the above quotation almost describes the parlor at Burholme, where the glow of candles and kerosene lamps was reflected in the mirrors and mirrored sconces around the room, and a painting leaned on the easel. A davenport, and corner etageres completed the room. Judging by the photographs, the room was fashionably full by Spofford's standards, as it would appear that one could just move about the room without knocking into objects (figures 12, 13 & 14).

Back Parlor

The back parlor was finished in much the same manner as the front parlor with coordinating wallpaper and border, only in deeper gold tones with a creamy background, grass matting, and similar lace under curtains. A large Oriental carpet covered much of the matting. A smaller one fit in the bay window, and a white, unidentified animal skin completed the layers of floor coverings (figure 28). Moldings in the ceiling were picked out in rich colors, possibly metallics, and a plant-like design in the corners decorated the ceiling (figure 30).¹³⁶

The decidedly different tone of the room was set by the horizontally striped, Moorish-inspired curtains at the north window and the Moorish Turkey corner.¹³⁷ Turkish or cozy corners constructed with “. . . a few yards of striped material, a few

¹³⁵Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, p. 222.

¹³⁶None of the photographs show the center of the back parlor ceiling. Perhaps there was additional decoration on the ceiling in that location.

¹³⁷The prayer rug covering the “cot” of the Turkey corner survives in the collection today; however, the other pillows and draped fabric do not. Many of the smaller accessories, like the Egyptian plaque, do survive.

curtain rods spiked with spearheads, a cot, and a batch of pillows . . .” were a fad in the eclectic 1890s.¹³⁸ Harriet Spofford had recommended the Moorish style in *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture* (1878), suggesting that houses might have at least one room where “some features of the style may always be indulged.”¹³⁹ Hexagonal tables with mother-of-pearl inlay and a prayer-book stand added to the ambiance of the Moorish corner (figure 31).¹⁴⁰

The back parlor contained a variety of other furniture styles. An eighteenth-century, pierced-splat, Chippendale-style chair was combined with a Rococo Revival parlor chair upholstered with a patterned plush seat and a plain back. There was at least one Rococo Revival side chair as well as an Elizabethan Revival chair with twist turnings and a needlework seat. In one photograph, a Renaissance Revival arm chair can just be seen inside the pocket doors (figure 30). This chair was upholstered in a Damask-like pattern and had turned legs and a swan’s neck arm support. Of these chairs, only the Elizabethan Revival example remains in the collection today.¹⁴¹

A flat-top china closet with a low-relief carved design at the top was placed against the east wall, near the pocket doors (figure 30).¹⁴² Small, turned, rectangular tea tables draped with textiles and displaying tea wares and other ceramics, a needlework covered footstool with tapered bun feet and kerosene lamps

¹³⁸Russell Lynes, *The Taste-makers*, Harper Brothers, 1949, pp. 170-171.

¹³⁹Spofford, *Art Decoration Applied to Furniture*, p.144.

¹⁴⁰The prayer stand and two Moorish, inlaid tables survive in the collection. A third table is in disrepair.

¹⁴¹The olive green seat cover on the Elizabethan chair has a floral design in the center of the seat and a Greek-key design around the sides of the cushion.

¹⁴²This particular china closet remains in the collection and is currently in use in the dining room.

completed the back parlor. A library-style kerosene lamp hung from the ceiling, over a central tea table, and a second kerosene lamp sat on a small table near the north window, next to the Turkey corner.¹⁴³

Photographs of the bay window reveal the dark tone of the wood trim in the back parlor, and relatively dark roller blinds at the windows behind the lace curtains. The bay was furnished with a pair of plush-upholstered, Rococo Revival parlor chairs, complete with antimacassars, flanking a small, parian, nineteenth-century copy of the Classical sculpture, “Crouching Venus.” In this view Venus rests on a four-legged, round, Chinese-style stand (figures 35 & 36). The stand remains in the collection; however, the chairs do not. A larger marble version of this same sculpture is shown on a rectangular stand in an alternate view of the bay (figure 34). This larger version of the nude survives in the collection today.¹⁴⁴ A divan in the northwest corner was covered in a floral design, with fringe and tassels from the seat rail to the floor. There were at least eight pillows on the couch. One of these, shown at the far right edge of the photograph, may have been sewn from an American flag. A brass-covered box for firewood and a framed image of a boy were posed in front of the couch (figure 32).

Dining Room

Not surprisingly, the dining room furnishings were as diverse as those in the other rooms on the first floor. A pair of large china closets, flanking the door, dominated the north end of the room (figures 37 & 38). These two pieces, no longer at Burholme today, were simple in overall design, with fretwork forming a

¹⁴³This central square-top, tea table appears to have an eighteenth-century base. However, no mention of a tea table is included among the known loans to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

¹⁴⁴The “Crouching Venus” which remains is too large and heavy for the Chinese-style stand. Mary Ryerss Bawn may have removed the smaller one when she moved to the gatehouse.

pointed arch at the top of each door and carved embellishments above the cornice. The cabinet on the northwest side of the room contained glassware, while the one on the northeast side of the room housed china, mostly Chinese export porcelain, as well as other European pieces; many of these pieces remain in the collection. A Colonial Revival sideboard on the east wall, opposite the mantelpiece, held silver on the serving surface. Two Chinese export porcelain bowls sat on the top shelf. This sideboard exhibits the creative stylistic combinations that epitomize the Colonial Revival movement. Its overall form and details such as its tapered legs and spade feet are based on Federal-era furniture, while its beveled mirrors, shelves and elaborate brasses are indicative of its Victorian origin (figure 39). Federal era sideboards and late nineteenth-century adaptations of their design may have become popular in part because Clarence Cook illustrated a sideboard of this type in *The House Beautiful*.¹⁴⁵

The dining room also included some of the Waln family's eighteenth-century furnishings. The side chairs and card table with tapered legs may have been used in the same room as the sideboard because it too had tapered legs (figures 38 & 40).¹⁴⁶ The Philadelphia, mahogany card table has "C"-scroll fretwork, gadrooning, a serpentine front, astragal corners Chippendale-style brasses and molded legs. It appeared in a c.1900 photograph posed in the southeast corner of the room, placed on an angle, just inside the door (figure 40). This card table

¹⁴⁵Cook, *The House Beautiful*, plate 69.

¹⁴⁶It is possible that the furniture was placed with some awareness of correspondences between the eighteenth-century pieces and their nineteenth-century revival counterparts. One of the c.1900 photographs specifically juxtaposed one of the Rococo or Chippendale chairs with a Colonial Revival desk that shares many design elements with the chair: claw-and-ball feet, carved cabriole legs and carved shells. The desk has nineteenth century proportions and a gallery top not seen on eighteenth century desks (figure 25).

has been at the Philadelphia Museum of Art since 1940.¹⁴⁷ The photograph shows the table closed, covered by a rectangular piece of light fabric which extends over the sides. A set of three pierced porcelain baskets on pedestals sat on top. The porcelain baskets remain in the collection, as does the large transfer-printed pitcher in the background.

A pair of c.1780, Philadelphia, splat-back side chairs with plain tapered legs and leather-upholstered slip seats were set near the northwest window frame and were angled slightly towards one another (figure 38).¹⁴⁸ The files at the Philadelphia Museum of Art indicate that the Ryerss family owned six matching chairs of this type. While only two are included in the photographs of the dining room, it is possible that the four others were in the room, perhaps similarly positioned in the remaining windows, but not photographed. The Waln heritage of the family was also evoked by displaying Robert Waln's monogrammed blue and white Chinese export porcelain service. Platters hung from the picture rail at the north end of the room, and plates of graduated size hung on either side of the sideboard on the east wall (figure 37).

The remaining furniture in the dining room was not captured by the camera. Of all the furniture in the photographs, only the Renaissance Revival-style main dining table remains in the collection. The c. 1890s eclectic-style oak dining chairs around the table, two smaller china closets with squatty bun feet which flanked the fireplace, an Elizabethan Revival corner what-not mounted in the southeast corner, a smaller table, and serving shelves are gone. The travel photographs and the

¹⁴⁷See Hornor, plate 276 for an illustration.

¹⁴⁸Hornor illustrates a similar chair in plate 289, only the Ryersses' chairs do not have molded legs or serpentine front rails. These chairs were exhibited at Mount Pleasant in the recent past, and have been at the Philadelphia Museum of Art since 1940.

Venetian Murano sconces on either side of the sideboard and the chandelier survive.

The dining room finishes differ from those in the other rooms. Instead of grass matting, there are highly polished floor boards under the rugs.¹⁴⁹ There was a large carpet with a light colored background, placed centrally in the room, and smaller area rugs at the edges of the room and in the window reveals. A large-scale border of stylized flowers in vases inside a nearly full circle decorated the part of the wall above the picture rail and below the cornice molding. The walls were most likely papered a solid dark color, in keeping with the use of a border. The wood trim in the room was dark and glossy--perhaps the original graining. The ceiling cornice contrasted with the dark interior, showing up as a lighter value in the photographs. All the chairs were upholstered in leather. The striped curtains hung on rods with rings in the same manner as the parlor curtains and puddled onto the floor. There were tie-backs of the same fabric finished with fringe (figure 38).

Mantelpieces

The mantelpieces were important decorative features in both the parlor and the dining room.¹⁵⁰ The Ryersses added a stylish touch to the original Italianate marble mantels by draping them with fabric (figures 19 & 42).¹⁵¹ The dining-room

¹⁴⁹The Beecher sisters did not recommend grass matting for dining rooms, as it was impractical. Beecher and Beecher Stowe, *American Woman's Home*, p. 86.

¹⁵⁰From the beginning, Burholme did not have working fireplaces on the first floor. There was a gravity-fed hot air system in place, with a coal-burning furnace in the basement. The system was incapable of warming the whole house efficiently, so the second and third floors did have working fireplaces.

¹⁵¹Despite the changing fashions, the Ryersses added another marble Italianate mantelpiece when they added the back parlor to the building in 1872. This mantel was not photographed in the 1890s; however, the library mantel above it, now removed, was photographed.

mantel shelf was dressed with a velvet top, with lace and tassels hanging about six inches below the level of the shelf, a practice recommended by Clarence Cook:

On the marble shelf of the mantel-piece is laid a board, covered with velvet or plush, and having a narrow valence of the same material over the edge. This valance should not be more than six inches deep, and it ought to avoid any very pronounced ornaments--one of the beautiful new English gimps or 'laces,' as they are called, makes the best decoration (figure 8).¹⁵²

Constance Cary Harrison in *Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes* (1882)

described a similar method of dressing the mantel shelf: "A fashion of trimming mantel-boards with large patterned antique or Irish lace, laid over velvet, has many admirers"¹⁵³ The parlor mantel shelf at Burholme did not have a velvet and lace cover. Instead, the top was draped in an embroidered, fringed fabric. This type of household embellishment was often executed by the lady of the house in the nineteenth century, and many books were devoted to such craft projects in the 1870s and 1880s.

Despite Clarence Cook's belief that clocks had no place in these rooms, The Ryersses placed clocks in the center of the mantel shelves, flanked by girandole candlesticks.¹⁵⁴ This practice was certainly quite common, as Cook loathed it:

¹⁵²Cook, *The House Beautiful*, p. 126.

¹⁵³Constance Cary Harrison, *Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes*, 1882, p. 172.

¹⁵⁴Cook, *The House Beautiful*, p. 120. All the objects on the parlor mantel shelf survive in the collection today. All are in excellent condition except the small folding screen with behind the clock, painted glass vases and the porcelain figures. The clock on the dining room mantel shelf does not survive, but the Asian-style vases and girandole candlesticks flanking it do. There appear to be two other indiscernible chachkas between the clock and the vases in the c.1900 photographs.

Hardly anything in the modern parlor is so uninteresting as the mantel-piece. It is such a trouble to most people to think what to put on it that they end by accepting blindly the dictation of friends and tradesmen, and making to Mammon the customary sacrifice of the clock-and-candelabra suite.¹⁵⁵

This arrangement persisted among Americans into the 1890s despite Cook's illustrations of asymmetrical mantel arrangements. The February, 1892 issue of *The Decorator and Furnisher* ". . . presented the aesthetic principle of such a setting. When lines connecting the tops of objects [on the mantel-shelf] formed angles pointing up, the mantel seemed to be 'frowning'; but pointing down, the same objects were smiling with 'the impression of motion and life.'"¹⁵⁶ This methodology dictated that the pieces on the mantel-shelf be arranged symmetrically, with the highest points on the ends, as the Ryersses placed their clocks in the center with taller, girandole candlesticks at the outside. Thus, the Ryersses followed common American practice in the arrangements of their mantelpieces.

The fireplaces in the parlors and the dining room never had working grates. Rather, all three were air vents for a gravity-fed hot-air system. By 1900, the fireplace openings were filled with fashionable soft, fleecy-appearing, fabric decoration (figure 38). Similar poufs with instructions for creating them were illustrated in Henry T. Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones, *Ladies' Fancy Work: Hints and Helps to Home Taste and Recreations* (1876):

For handsome grates, fire-papers are not appropriate; but as there is generally a desire to make a pleasant change of appearance in the

¹⁵⁵Cook, *The House Beautiful*, p. 119.

¹⁵⁶As quoted in Edgar de N. Mayhew and Minor Myers, Jr., *A Documentary History of American Interiors from the Colonial Era to 1915*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980, p. 211.

rooms, when the spring house-cleaning is rendering all things fresh and new, it will greatly gratify many an ambitious housekeeper, to hear of a charming mode of changing the black, grim and fireless grate into a thing of beauty, which will not only hide the cheerlessness always produced by an empty and cold stove or grate, but make it into a mass of soft, lacy cloud, that appears like some mist-bed of the fairies, than a smokey, grimy fireplace. To produce this pretty effect, obtain a couple of yards of white tarlatan, which proceed to ravel thread by thread, until a pile sufficiently large to fill the entire grate and fender has been obtained. Keep it light, and use great care not to press upon or mash it; then scatter it lightly into the grate and fender until a hillock like fleecy snow-drifts is formed. Then take pieces of stiff wire, and threading spangles upon fine cotton, sew them. . . . It is exceedingly tasteful to use pale, tinted tarlatan for this purpose, such as sulphur yellow, blossom color, gas-light blue, arsenic green etc, suiting your furniture.¹⁵⁷

The Ryersses' poofy mass was comprised of several colors as represented by three distinct values in the black and white photographs. The presence of this decorative feature may also indicate that these particular images were taken in the summer season when the heating system was not in use. The back parlor also had a marble mantelpiece to match those in the front rooms. However, this mantel was not captured by the c.1900 photographs of the room. It is therefore unknown whether this grate was similarly dressed.

The c.1900 photographs of the interiors at Burholme capture a brief moment in the decorative history of those rooms. While it is possible to speculate about the origins and or vintage of certain furnishings and decorative finishes based on their stylistic features, it is not possible to document precisely whose taste is represented by the decorative choices in the photographs. Most likely it is that of Mary Ryerss Bawn layered over those items which had previously belonged to the

¹⁵⁷Henry T. Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones, *Ladies' Fancy Work, Hints and Helps to Home Taste and Recreations*, 1876, pp. 144-145. Note that the decoration is not officially named by Williams and Jones. Tarlatan is a thin, stiff, transparent muslin.

Waln family or had been placed at Burholme by Joseph, Anne or Robert Ryerss. The photographs tell us that the Ryersses valued tradition, keeping their possessions in good condition, and in the way heirloom antiques are highlighted in the images. They also tell us that the Ryersses adhered to current taste in the use of the Turkish corner and the fireplace fillers. Their possessions revealed some of their interests: travel, art, love of pets, and curios, like the lighthouse clock and the horseshoe mirror. Their things reinforced whom they were to themselves, while as a body of artifacts, they prompt questions and invite visual learning from visitors both then and now. Although some of the photographs suggest eccentric or idiosyncratic taste, overall the images show a general adherence to the trends of the time.

Conclusion

A Photographic Exhibit

The Ryerss family history, the late nineteenth-century photographs, and the objects themselves offer rich possibilities for interpreting “Burholme” to the public. This fourth chapter will suggest changes at Ryerss Museum, which would allow the site to be better interpreted to the public. Improved programming and docent training will greatly enhance the experience visitors have at Ryerss Museum.

The greatest obstacle to reassembling the period rooms at Ryerss Museum is spatial. Walls and furniture are both missing. Questions abound. Should we place objects in the parlor which we know were in the hall, simply because they survive, while others do not? A museum period room should not evoke the past in a nonspecific way. Rather, it should represent the past as accurately as possible. To do so at Burholme would require not only reinstallation of furniture, decorative objects and finishes such as paint, wallpaper and curtains, but would also mandate rebuilding the interior walls to create realistic rooms. At a museum like Ryerss, which has been so plagued with poor maintenance and understaffing, reproductions would be more appropriate than period objects, particularly those irreplaceable eighteenth-century pieces, now under the care of professional curators and conservators at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The challenge is to deal with the layers of history in the open structure of the interior spaces, yet acknowledge that they were once discrete rooms.

In comparing Ryerss Museum's room configuration with period rooms in large art museums like the Philadelphia Museum of Art or the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the missing walls at Burholme are comparable with the way one

views some of the art museum rooms. Because of the missing wall, the visitor experiences the rooms as a full-scale doll house. However, unlike the art museums where rooms are removed from their original context and represent diverse places in space and time, the overall context of the site is still apparent at Burholme. A historic site offers visitors a more complete picture of history than can rooms which have been entirely removed from their historic context.

Today's historic preservation ethic would never allow a site to be altered the way that the Ryerss Museum was in 1907-1910 and in 1921. However, it is that same preservation ethic that considers all of a building's history to be equally important and potentially worth saving, and demands that changes must be reversible. That retrofitting a house like Burholme is less likely happen again is a reason to preserve the space as it is. The changes, including those initiated by the Friends of Burholme in 1974 to return period rooms to the first floor rooms, are part of Burholme's history and part of twentieth-century history. The physical space of the first floor tells a preservation story, one of how different times valued different aspects of the historic interior. Let us not make the mistake of further altering this building in an irreversible way. The second reason for not restoring the walls is purely practical. The Fairmount Park Commission needs a plan that allows it to better interpret the building with the resources available. True restoration would violate today's preservation ethic, and it is not financially feasible.

The question then becomes how do we tell the nineteenth and twentieth-century stories of Burholme, home of the Ryerss family, home to Mary Ryerss Bawn and her collection, as well as the story of the building alterations and additions in the same space? A workable solution is to use the abundance of photographs of the c.1900 interior, which one could argue are the highlights of the

Ryerss collection, to create an exhibit in the first floor spaces. Ideally, the exhibit would combine enlargements of room views, juxtaposed with objects that appear in the photographs. For example, at the south end of the parlor, exhibit an enlargement of figure 22, depicting the lighthouse clock in front of the pier glass between the windows, and arrange the surviving objects shown in that photograph in the room adjacent to the image. The photographs and objects could form the basis of a changing exhibition. Photographs open up the possibility of creating a self-guided tour. They give the visitor a real image of the past to which he can relate and allow for visitor interaction by way of imagination and the comparison of what was and what is.

If the Fairmount Park Commission and the Friends of Burholme choose to proceed with this plan and are willing to undertake a major capital campaign, funds could be raised to recreate the finishes in the rooms to create the feel of the c. 1900 spaces on the first floor. The wallpaper could be reproduced in a flat rather than embossed design. Real grass matting could be applied over the floors, and the correct window treatments could be reproduced and put in place. Also, it would not be too difficult to select textiles to recreate the Turkish corner in the back parlor.

First, however, further examination and study of the building as an object is necessary. The structure should be reexamined for stability, especially around the capitals of the columns where there is cracking. More knowledge about the finishes can be gained through a thorough reanalysis of the interior and exterior paint colors. The ceiling should also be studied for remnants of the former decorative ceiling and possibly restored. The wood trim around windows may provide further clues to how window treatments were hung. Before any changes are undertaken, the air conditioning problems must be truly under control, because

it would be a tragedy to spend money on restoration work and new textiles and wallpaper and have it be ruined by leaks. The Fairmount Park Commission is installing a new system in the summer of 1999.

Study of the photographs of the house, the information available in the Ryerss Museum files, and nineteenth-century shelter books begins to bring the period rooms to life, and helps to make sense of them. While many objects are missing from the collection, many remain on site. The photographic exhibit and the potential addition of the proper finishings and textiles would create a self-guided interpretation of the true past, rather than a generic Victorian past at the Ryerss Museum. Such an exhibit will return the true Ryerss family and their possessions to the surviving portions of the original house so the family's legacy can be appreciated within an understanding of late nineteenth-century, suburban Philadelphia.



Figure 1. The front or south facade of Burholme c.1900, built in 1859 in the Italianate style, framed by large copper beech trees. The Moorish-style tower was added by 1892. Courtesy, Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 2. The third floor storage room, c.1977. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 3. The first floor of the Ryerss Museum between its 1810 public opening and prior to the 1922 rear addition. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 4. The Hall, c. 1900. Notice the Chinese lantern and the kerosene fixture on the stair newel, the decorative designs on the ceiling and above the picture rail, and the checked grass matting on the floor. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 5. The hall, c. 1900. This Savonarola chair received visitors inside the front door. Above the chair are photographs of the Robert Ryerss Insane Asylum in Beirut and a thermometer. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 6. The hall, c. 1900, a second Savonarola-type chair, opposite the one above. There are framed travel photographs above the chair. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 7. The hall, c. 1900, a wood sculpture on a fringed fabric draped pedestal. A Gothic Revival armchair with a Chinese silk pillow sits between the sculpture and the hall stand. Above the sculpture are souvenir travel photographs and one of the horse and dog portraits. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 8. The hall, c. 1900. The eighteenth-century, marble-top pier table, with a bed warmer, an icon of the Colonial Revival, underneath. The Rococo carving on the table is juxtaposed with a Rococo Revival sideboard. Both are covered with objects, many of which remain in the collection at the Ryerss Museum. The sideboard is in the basement of the Church of the Holy Nativity, Rockledge, according to Mary Ryerss Bawn's will. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 9. The hall, c. 1900. The small wash stand to the left of the sideboard and the chair in the foreground remain in the collection. At the left edge of the image are the arm and leg of an eighteenth-century arm chair. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 10. The hall, c. 1900. This is the same wall as shown in the previous illustration, only rearranged to include a Gothic Revival arm chair, rustic stand, and a late eighteenth-century clock. On the wall to the right of the clock, is the 1875 painting of Burholme by Edmund Darch Lewis. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.

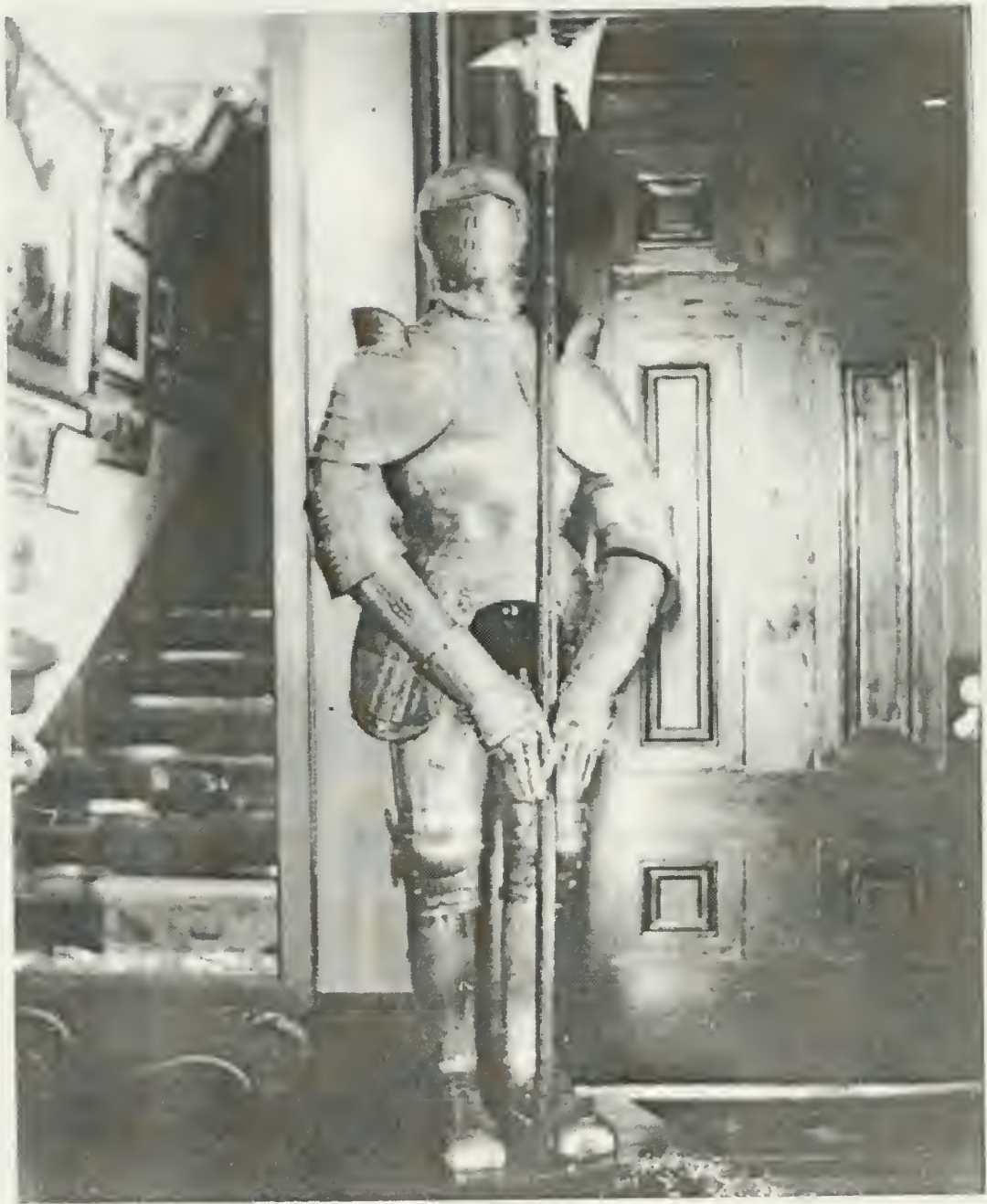


Figure 11. The hall, c. 1900. The suit of armor guards the foot of the stairs, reflected in the Rococo Revival pier glass. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 12. The parlor, c. 1900, looking south. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 13. The parlor, c. 1900, looking south with the window shades raised. The piano leg is barely visible to the right of the easel. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 14. The Parlor, c. 1900, looking toward the northwest corner, highlighting the Arabian horseman sculpture. In one view are a Rococo revival chair side chair, a stuffed arm chair, and an eighteenth-century Chippendale-style side chair. Notice the Venetian glass chandelier and the decorative ceiling and wallpapers. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 15. The parlor, c. 1900, on the western wall is the Eastlake-style cabinet. Flanking the cabinet on the walls, are the Venetian mirrored sconces. Above is a portrait of Phebe Lewis Waln. Notice the child's Windsor chair and the washstand to the left. Also notice the upholstery on the stuffed arm chair. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 16. The parlor, c. 1900. Notice the homemade footstool under the table. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 17. The parlor, c. 1900. A detail of the table shown in the previous image, highlighting the owl kerosene lamp. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 18. The parlor, c. 1900, looking north. The portiere divides the front and back parlors. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 19. The parlor, c. 1900. The mantel is draped with a fringed throw. Notice the symmetrical arrangement of the items on the mantel shelf, with the clock in the center and girandoles at the outside edges. Behind the screen, is a decorative fabric treatment similar to that in the dining room fireplace opening. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 20. The parlor, c. 1900. The west wall, highlighting a marble bust of a woman, a kerosene floor lamp and the horseshoe mirror. The child's arrow back Windsor chair is just visible behind the pedestal. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.

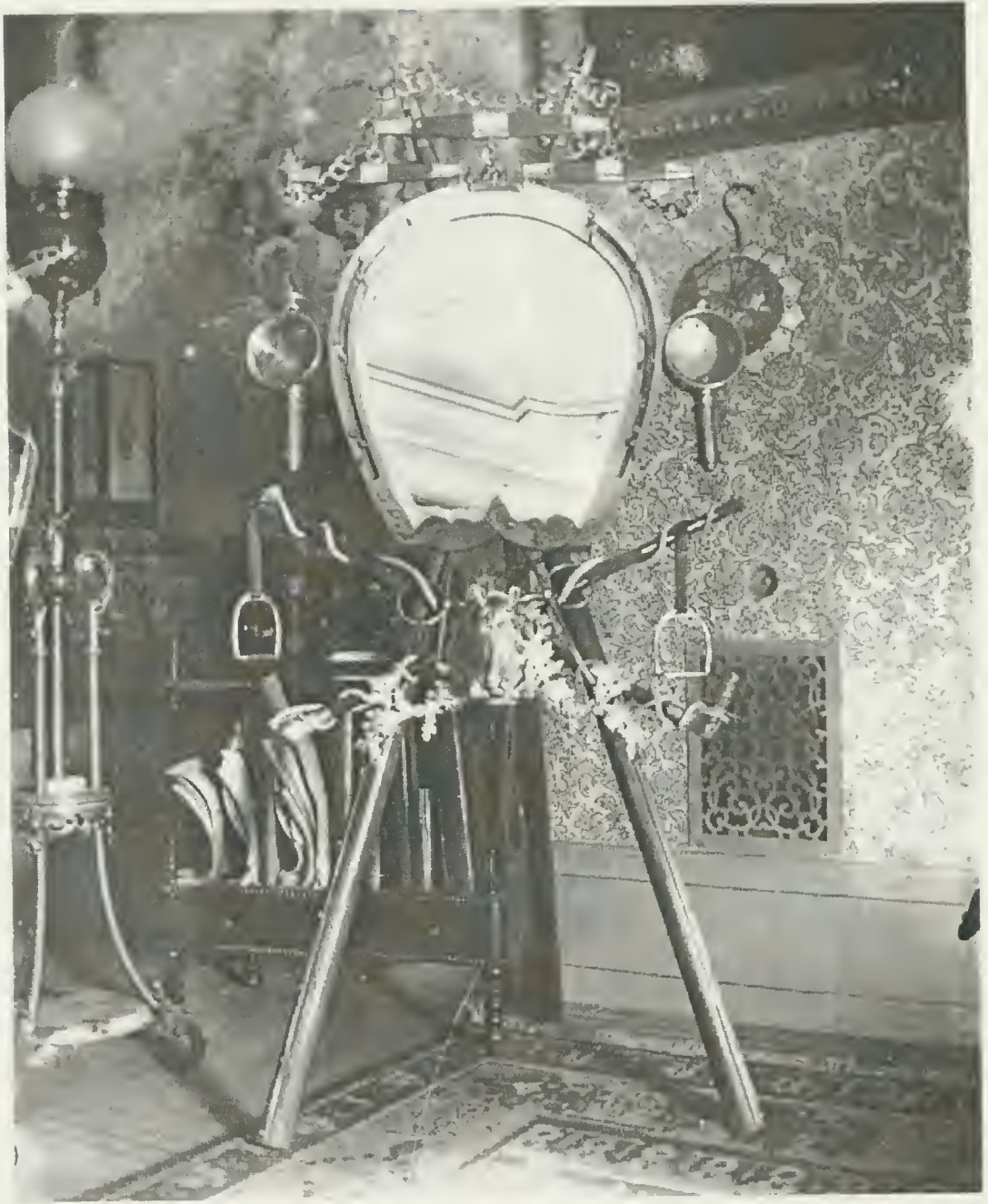


Figure 21. The parlor, c. 1900. The horseshoe mirror reflects the decorative ceiling. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.

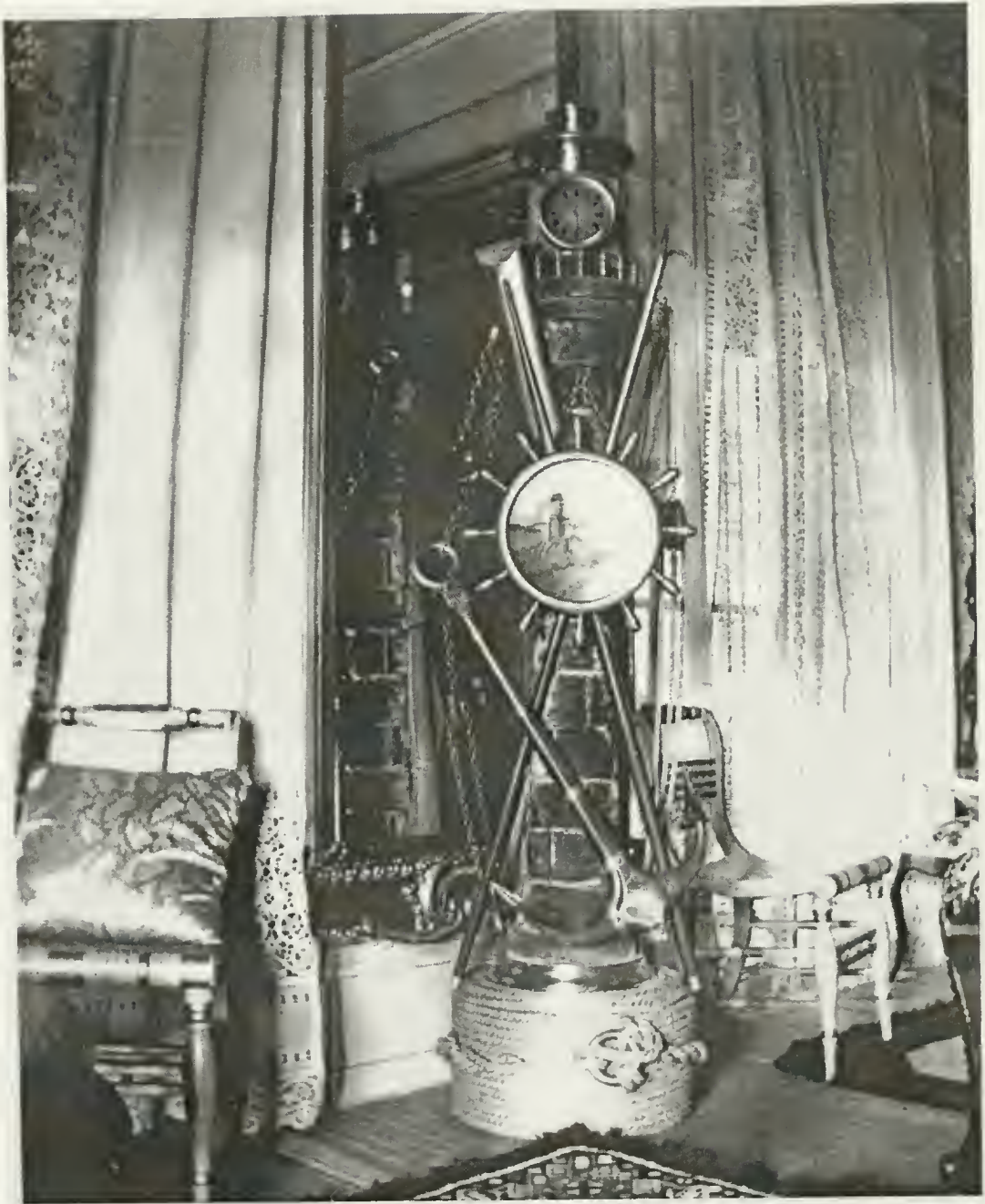


Figure 22. The parlor, c. 1900. The lighthouse clock, with its rope base, and velvet column is flanked by early-nineteenth-century fancy chairs. Notice the lace window curtains. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 23. The parlor, c. 1900. Another arrangement of the west wall features a sculpture of a couple, the German kitchen diorama, a leather tankard, shaped like a woman on top of the diorama, and both child's Windsor chairs. The same kerosene lamp as shown in figures 20 and 21 has a shade in this image. Notice the ottoman in the northwest corner. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 24. The parlor, c. 1900. Probably the southeast corner of the room highlighting the marble female bust. This velvet covered dressing table remains in the collection. The small crown on the table could be a souvenir from the 1901 coronation of Edward VII. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 25. The parlor, c. 1900. The Colonial chair and the Colonial Revival desk side-by-side on the west wall. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 26. The parlor, c. 1900. In a southern corner of the room, a display of ceramics. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 27. The parlor, c. 1900. More ceramics displayed, probably in the southeast corner. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 28. Back parlor, c. 1900, looking north. The child's Windsor chair, also seen in the parlor photographs, is in the foreground. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 29. Back parlor, c. 1900, looking north. The sunlight dramatically highlights the pierced splat of the Chippendale-style chair. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 30. Back parlor, c. 1900, looking north at Turkish corner. Notice the decorative ceiling and the chair with the swan's neck arm support. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 31. Back parlor, c. 1900, detail of the Turkish corner. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 32. Back parlor, c. 1900. The ottoman in the northwest corner of the room dressed with a variety of pillows, including one on the right suggestive of an American flag. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 33. Back parlor, c. 1900. This tea table, to the right of the bay window in the northwest corner of the room, is set in front of a china closet. The bed warmer, which also appeared in the hall under the pier table is behind the fire screen. The screen and china closet remain in the collection. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 34. Back parlor, c. 1900. A nineteenth-century, large, marble "Crouching Venus," modeled on a Classical sculpture in the Uffizzi Gallery in Florence, Italy, seen here in the bay window on a solid stand. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 35. Back parlor, c. 1900. A smaller parian version of the "Crouching Venus" seen here on a Chinese stand, flanked by Rococo revival arm chairs in the bay window. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 36. Back parlor, c. 1900. The parian "Crouching Venus" on the same Chinese stand, framed by the window curtains. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 37. Dining room, c. 1900, looking northeast. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 38. Dining room, c. 1900. The northwest corner and the decorative fabric in the fireplace opening. A pair of late eighteenth-century splat-back side chairs frame the window well. Notice the decorative design at the top of the wall and the Chinese export porcelain hanging from the picture rail. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 39. Dining room, c. 1900. The Colonial Revival sideboard. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 40. Dining room, c. 1900. The south end of the room. The eighteenth-century Philadelphia card table is posed with porcelains on top. The leather upholstered oak dining chairs were probably quite new at the time the photograph was taken. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 41. Dining room, c. 1900. The Venetian chandelier. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 42. Dining room, c. 1900. Like the one in the parlor, the mantelpiece is accessorized symmetrically with a clock in the center and girandoles on the outer edges. The white vases are Japanese Satsumaware. Small china closets flank the fireplace. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 43. Burholme as painted by Edmund Darch Lewis in 1875. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.

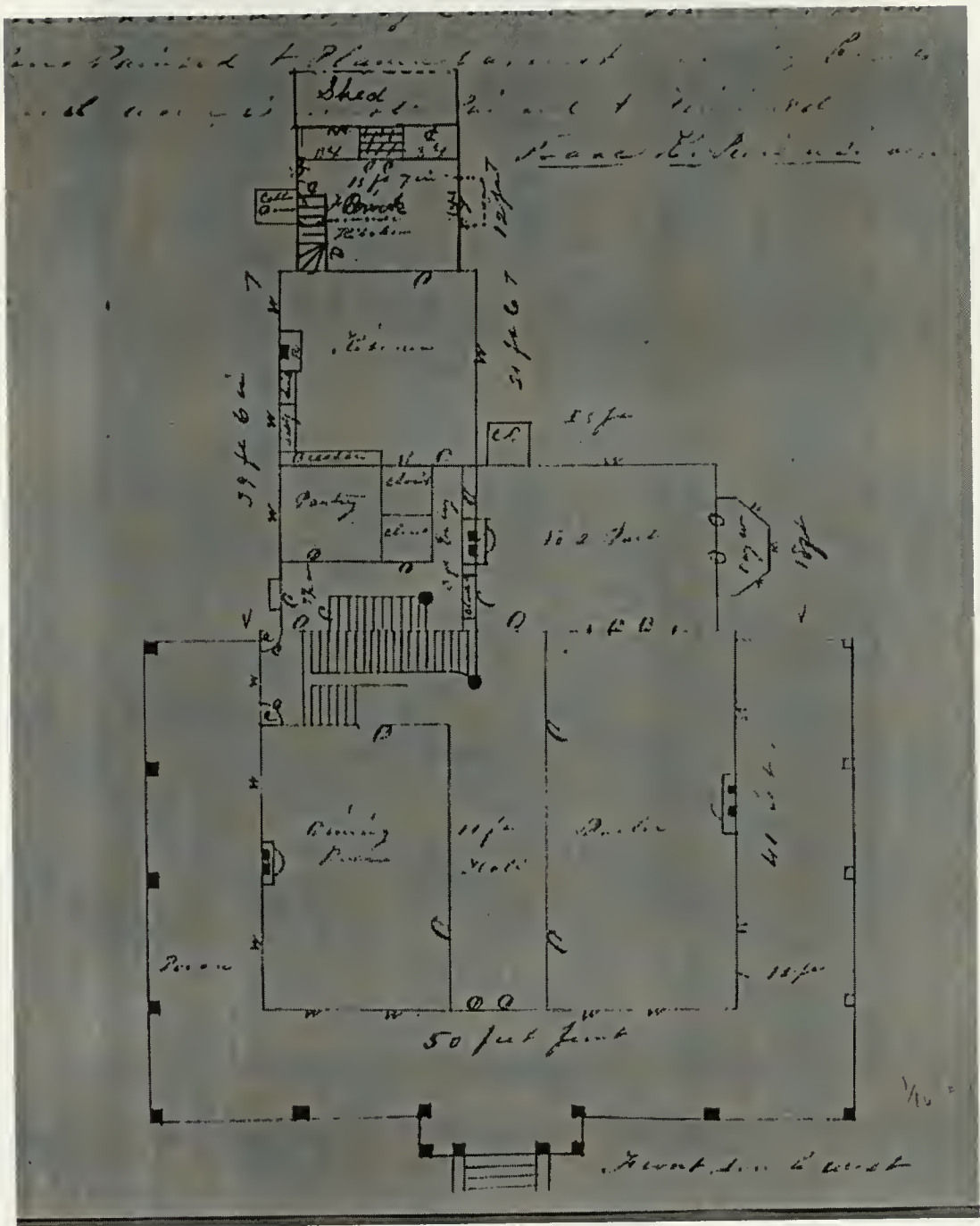


Figure 44. Plan of Burholme from Franklin Fire Insurance Company Survey #28589, 1872, showing the interior plan of the house. North is at the top. Courtesy, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

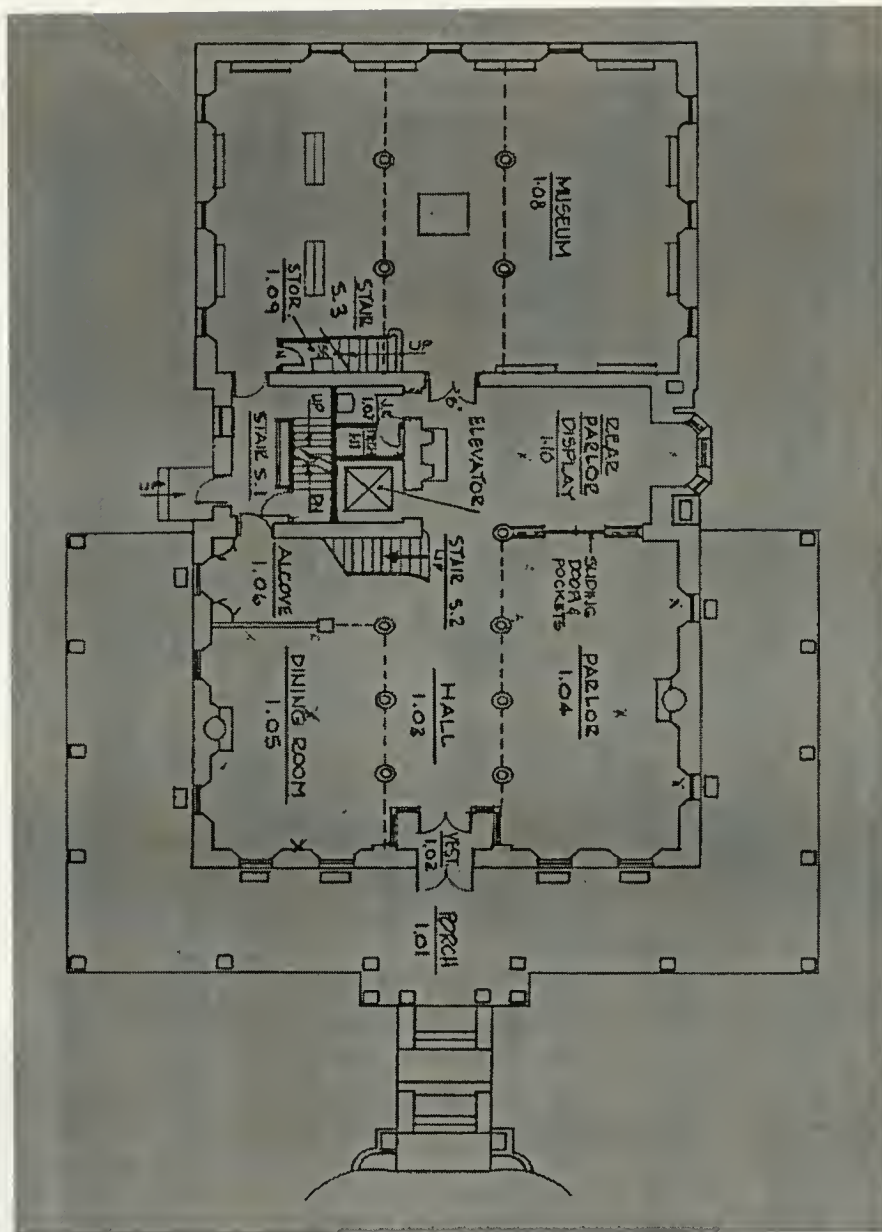


Figure 45. Current floor plan of Burholme. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 46. Joseph Waln Ryerss (1803-1868). Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 47. Anne Waln Ryeress (1813-1886). Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 48. Robert Waln Ryerss (1831-1896). Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 49. Mary Ann Reed Ryerss Bawn (?-1916). Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 50. Mary Ryerss in the second floor library, c. 1900. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 51. Phebe Lewis Waln (1768-1845), wife of Robert Waln, Jr., and mother of Susan Waln Ryerss and Ann Waln Ryerss. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 52. Robert Waln, Jr. (1720/1-1784), father of Susan Waln Ryerss and Ann Waln Ryerss. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 53. Unknown man c. 1900, either Robert Ryerss or the Reverend Bawn, on the steps at Burholme with a small dog. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.



Figure 54. Old Grey as painted by Newbold Hough Trotter in 1873. Courtesy, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives.

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INDEX

A

American "Colonial" furniture, 35
 American antiques
 interest in, 36
 Armitt, Elizabeth, 13
 Arts and Crafts Style, 37
 Asia, 9, 58
 Autumn from Burholme, 22

B

back parlor, 1, 7, 10, 12, 17, 19, 35, 38, 39, 45,
 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 57, 60, 64
 bay window, 54
 chairs, 53
 Moorish inspiration, 52
 wallpaper, 52
 Bawn, John Grant, 8, 9, 27, 31. *See* The Reverend
 Bawn
 Bawn, Mary Ryerss, 13, 5, 8, 9, 16, 27, 30, 31,
 33, 41, 54, 60, 63
 Beaux-Arts, 8
 Beecher sisters, 37, 57
 Bicentennial Celebrations, 11
 Bright's Disease, 26
 British Aesthetic style, 37, 44
 Buddha, 9, 33
 Burholme, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,
 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33,
 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43, 44, 50, 51, 54,
 57, 58, 60, 62, 63
 alterations to building, 7
 c. 1900 photographs, 29
 changes, 21
 historic context, 29
 household inventories, 12
 inheritance, 25
 kitchen, 10
 land purchase, 16
 renovations, 7
 service wing, 10
 summer house, 34
 Burholme Park
 addition, 9

C

Campbell, Larry, 11
 Campbell, Mary Lou, 11

carriage house, 17, 22, 30, 49
 Centennial Exposition, 35, 37
 chandeliers, 50
 child's Windsor chair, 50
 Chinese export porcelain, 54, 56
 Chippendale, 34, 40, 41, 44, 47, 48, 53, 55
 Church of the Holy Nativity, 27, 28, 41
 City History Society, 8
 City of Philadelphia, 4, 5, 6, 11, 14, 21, 34
 Colonial and Early Federal houses, 6
 Colonial Revival, 31, 35, 37, 44, 55
 Crouching Venus, 54
 Crystal Palace, 18

D

Davidson, The Reverend William H., 26
 Davis, Isaac A., 16
 decor, 35
 decorative ceilings, 7, 30, 43
 Delaware Valley, 2
 dining room, 1, 7, 11, 12, 36, 38, 42, 50, 53, 54,
 55, 56, 57, 58, 59
 chairs, 56
 china closets, 54
 sideboard, 38, 41, 55, 56
 Dobson, Z. Poulson, 25
 Dog Cemeteries, 20
 dogs, 15, 20, 21, 23, 38

E

easel, 50, 51, 52
 Eastlake, Charles Locke, 1, 37, 42
 Eastlake-style curio cabinet, 50
 eclecticism, 35, 44
 Edward VII
 coronation, 31
 Elizabethan Revival, 47, 49, 50, 53, 56
 etageres, 50, 51, 52

F

Fairmount Park, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 33, 37
 Fairmount Park Archives, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14
 Fairmount Park Commission, 3, 6, 9, 10, 33, 63,
 64, 65
 Far East, 8
 Federal, 6, 34, 55
 fireplace
 embellishment, 59

Frankford, 14, 16, 18, 33
Free Library of Philadelphia, 10
Friends of Burholme, 1, 3, 11, 63, 64
front parlor, 7, 11, 19, 45, 46, 52

G

Garrett, Elizabeth Donaghy, 33
German kitchen, 51
Gothic Revival, 35, 39
grass matting, 43, 52

H

hall, 14, 37, 38
 lighting, 41
hall stand, 40
Harper's Magazine, 37
Harrison, Constance Cary, 37, 58
Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 7, 8, 9, 17, 24, 26, 27
History of Burholme" scrapbook, 11
Honorable Commissioners of Fairmount Park, 10
horse shoe mirror, 21, 51
horses, 15, 20, 21, 23, 38
Hough, Oliver, 26
house museum, 2, 4, 6, 7
household inventories, 12

J

Japan, 8, 9, 33
Jeanes, Joseph, 16
Jeanes, Joshua T., 16

K

kerosene lighting fixture, 12
kerosene owl lamp, 48
Kimball, Fiske, 6

L

Laurel Hill Cemetery, 9, 13, 16
Leach, Frank Willing, 26
Lewis, Edmund Darch, 21, 38
librarian
 job description, 10
 Miss McKee, 11
Lincoln and Ryerss, 13
Loudon, John Claudius, 36

M

mantel
 arrangement, 59

 clocks, 58
mantelpiece, 47, 51, 55, 57, 60
mantelpieces, 8, 57, 59
Martin, Thomas, 5
McIlhenny, Henry P., 6
Miss McKee, 11
modern picture-hanging technique, 39
Monmouth County, New Jersey, 13, 24
Moorish tower, 21
Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 6
Mt. Vernon, 6
museum
 1978 restoration, 12
 interpretation, 12
 inventory, 11
 period rooms, 11
 storage area, 11

N

922 Walnut Street, 15, 17, 25, 34, 44
New York City, 13, 24
Newtown Railroad, 26

O

Old Grey, 21
Oriental rugs, 44, 45, 52
ottoman
 needlework, 48
ottomans, 44, 46
Oxford Avenue, 5, 9

P

parlor, 1, 7, 12, 14, 17, 19, 31, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 57, 58, 59, 62, 64
lighthouse clock, 48
seating arrangement, 46
side chairs, 47
upholstery, 46
wallpaper, 44
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 21
Pennsylvania Bar Association, 22
Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities, 9
Pepper, George Wharton, Esquire, 5
Philadelphia, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 47, 48, 50, 53, 55, 56, 65
Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, 5
Philadelphia Exchange, 14
Philadelphia Museum. *See* Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia Museum of Art, 6, 7, 10, 21, 35, 40, 41, 48, 53, 55, 56, 62

photographs, 1, 2, 3, 12, 15, 22, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 47, 50, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 62, 63, 65
 dating of, 30
 piano, 19, 50
 picture rail, 38, 44, 56, 57
 pocket doors, 12, 19, 53
 portiere, 34, 49
 prescriptive household literature, 38

Q

Queen Anne, 34, 48

R

railroad, 13, 14, 16, 18
 Reed, Mary Anne, 4, 26
 Renaissance Revival, 35, 40, 53, 56
 Renaissance-revival, 39
 The Reverend Bawn, 8, 10, 33
 Rittenhouse Club, 24
 Robert Ryerss Asylum, 28
 Robert Waln Ryerss Museum, 11, 20, 23
 Rockledge, 27, 28, 41
 Rococo Revival, 34, 35, 42, 44, 47, 51, 53, 54
 Ryers station, 13
 Ryerss family, 3, 4, 9, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 44, 50, 56, 62, 63, 65
 diaries, 15
 interests, 61
 portraits, 51
 Ryerss Infirmary, 14, 21, 24, 26
 Ryerss Infirmary for Dumb Animals. *See* Ryerss Home for Aged Equines
 Ryerss Museum, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 37, 43, 48, 50, 62, 63, 65
 Christmas Bazaar, 2
 opening to the public, 5
 Ryerss, Anne Waln, 14, 19, 21, 24, 27, 34, 35, 60
 scrapbook, 15, 19
 Ryerss, Hannah Waln, 26
 Ryerss, John P., 13
 Ryerss, Joseph, 35
 Ryerss, Joseph Waln, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 36, 60
 Ryerss, Robert Waln, 4, 5, 8, 14, 15, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 40, 60
 character, 22
 education, 22
 law career, 25
 marriage, 25
 marriage scandal, 26
 memorial ward, 31
 obituary, 23
 poor health, 23, 25

social life, 24
 travels, 23
 will, 4, 7

S

Savonarola chairs, 39
 Seale, William, 29, 30, 32
 Sloan, Samuel, 17, 19
 Social Art Club, 24
 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 21, 24
 souvenir photographs. *See* travel photographs
 Spofford, Harriet, 1, 37, 42, 44, 50, 51, 52
 Staten Island, 13

T

Talbot, George, 29
The Germantown Guide, 7, 8
The Model Architect, 17
The Northeast Breeze, 11
 The Reverend Bawn, 10, 33. *See* Bawn, John Grant. *See* Bawn, John Grant
The York Road Old and New, 21
 Tioga Railroad, 13, 14
 tourism, 2
 Trotter, Newbold Hough, 21
 Turkey corner, 52
 Turkish brass platters, 38
 Turkish corner, 35, 36, 40, 44, 53, 61, 64

U

University of Pennsylvania, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 34

V

Vallee, Alice J., 31
 Vivisection, 20

W

Wagner, Joan, 11
 wall sconces, 50
 wall-to-wall carpeting, 34
 Waln Grove, 14, 27, 33
 Waln, Anne, 15
 Waln, Hannah, 13
 Waln, Jacob Shoemaker, 13
 Waln, Phebe Lewis, 14
 Waln, Richard, 13
 Waln, Robert Junior, 14, 15, 27, 40, 51, 56
 Waln, Susan, 14
 Walnford, 13
 Welsh, Frank, 42

White, The Reverend William, 14
William Penn chairs, 39
William Seale, 30
Williams, Henry T. and Mrs. C. S. Jones, 37 48,
59, 60
window curtains, 33, 34, 45, 49, 52, 54, 57, 62
wood graining, 42

Y

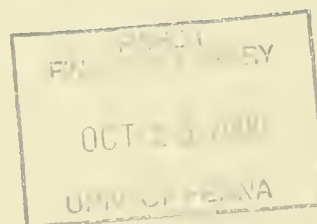
Yorkshire, England, 4, 17, 35

Z

Zantzinger, Borie and Medary, 10

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